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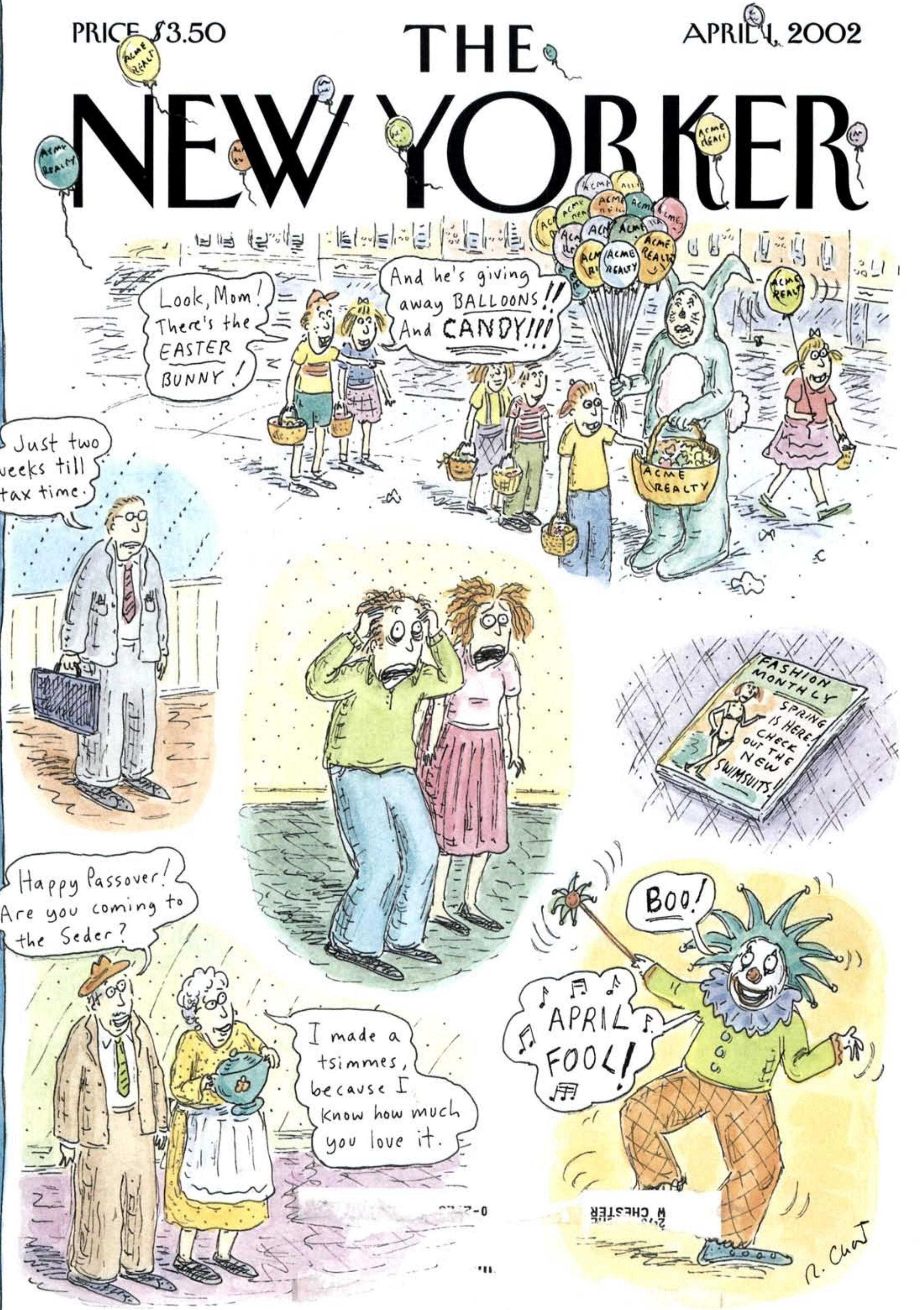
THE NEW YORKER

APRIL 1, 2002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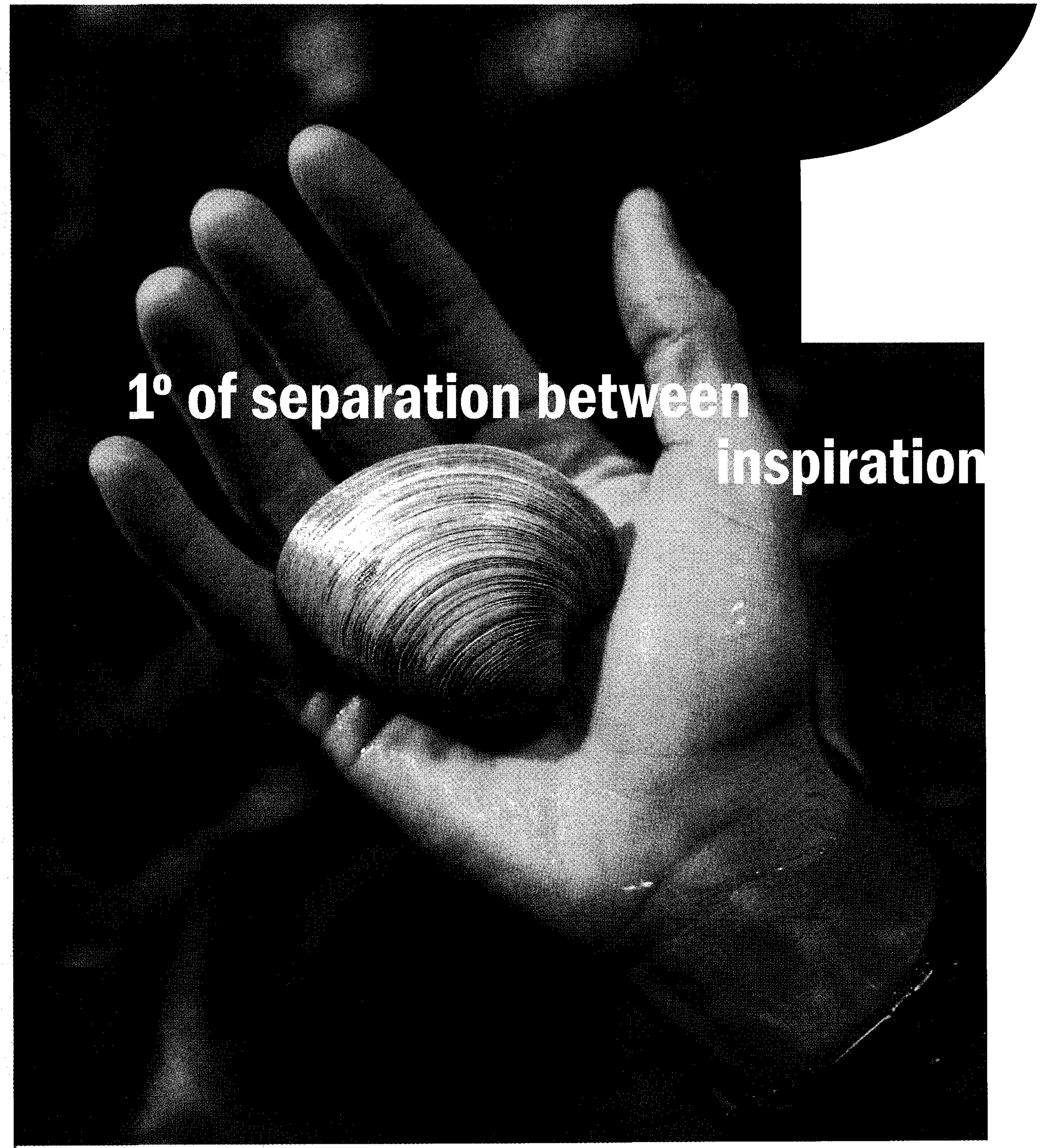

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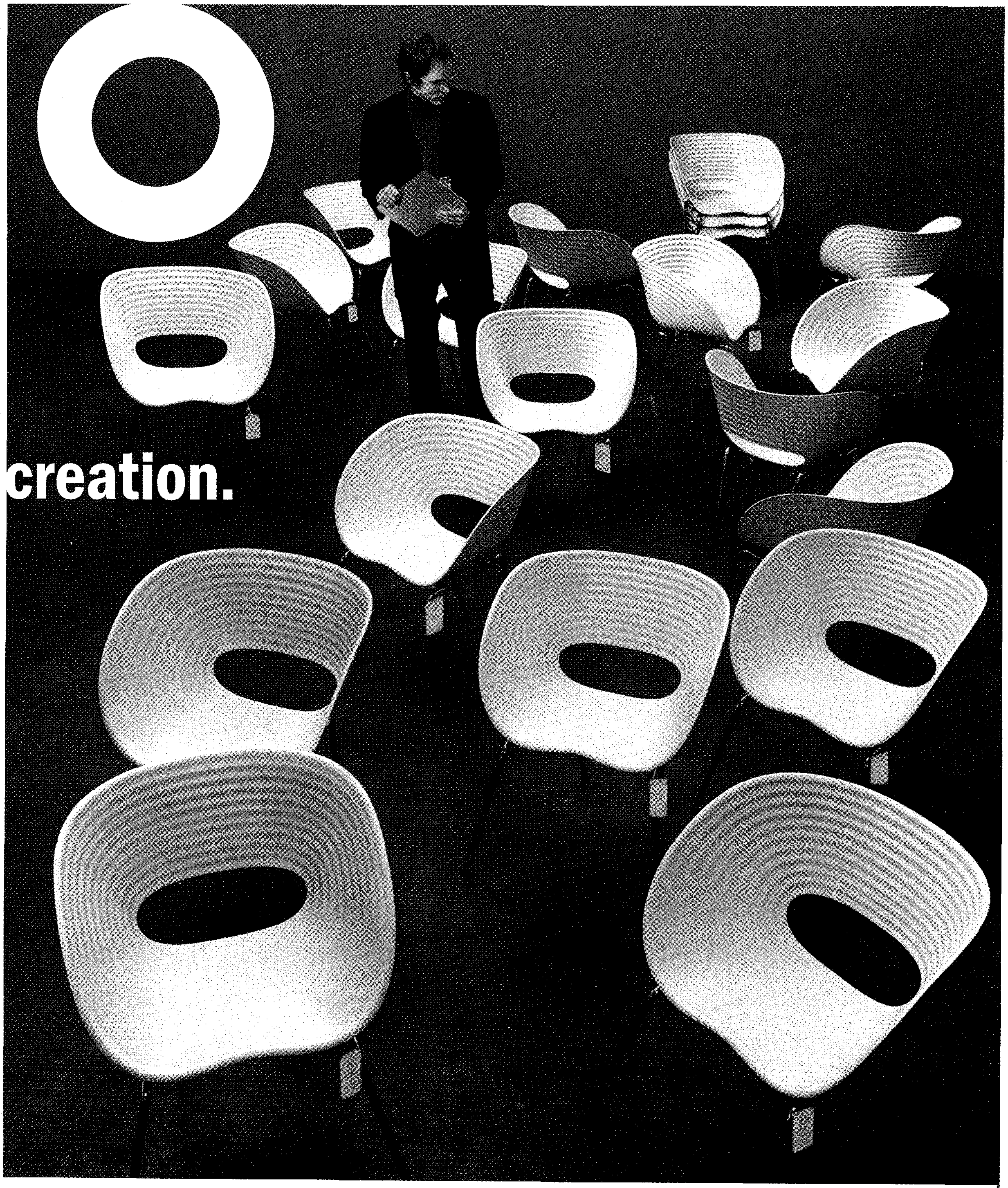

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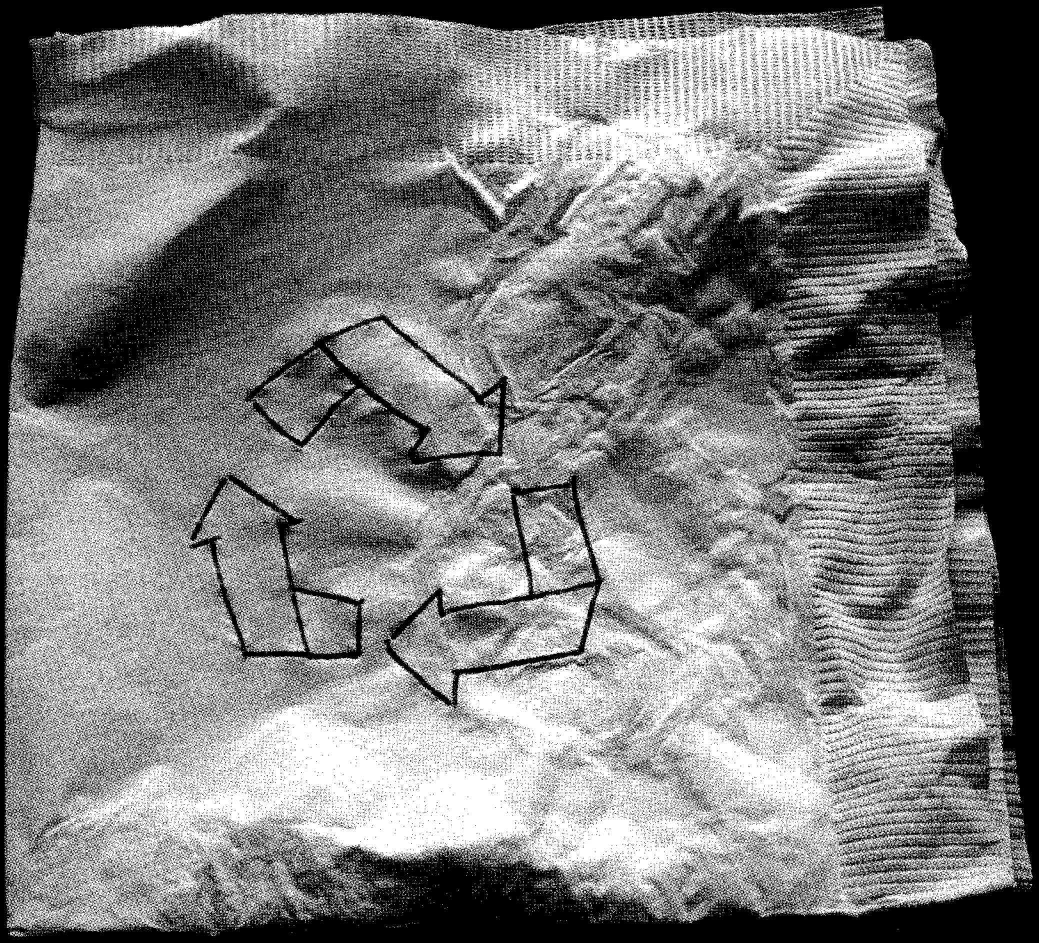

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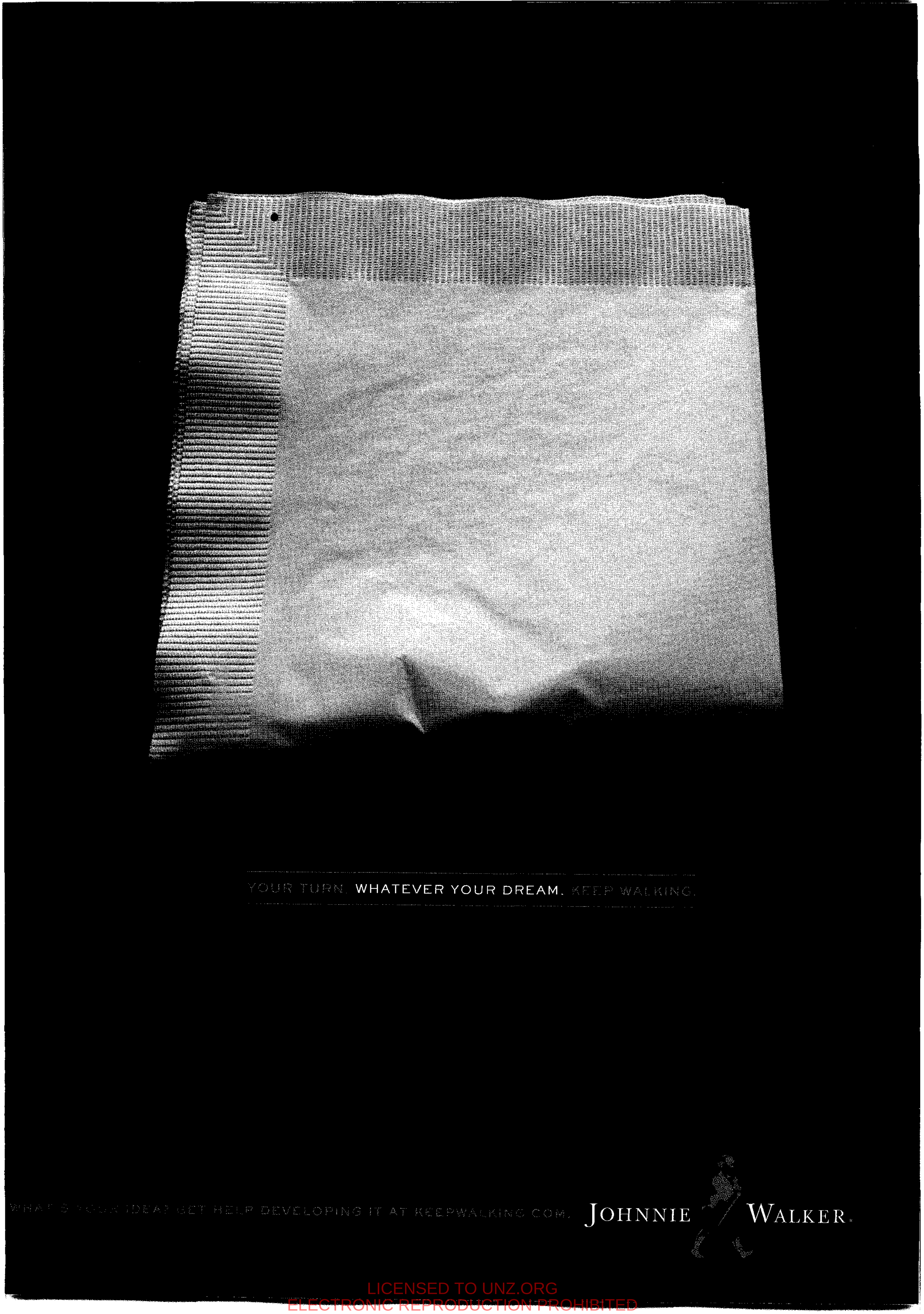

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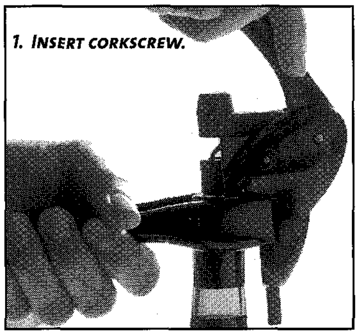
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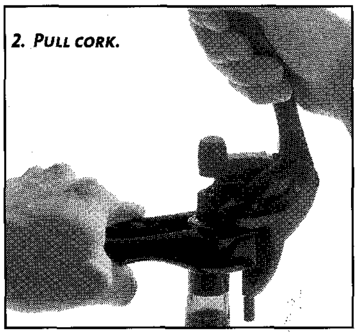
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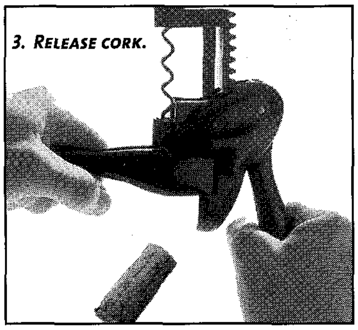
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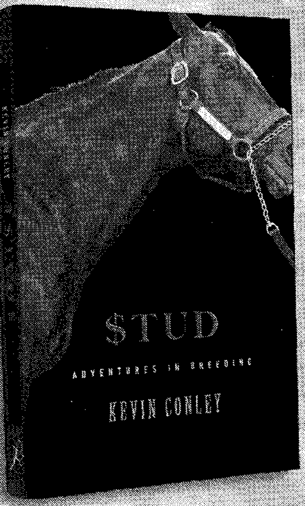

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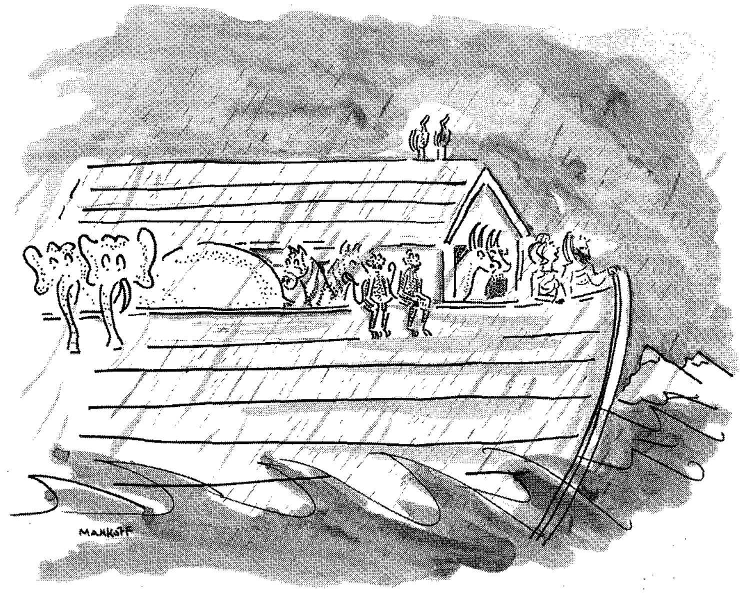

"Well, we needed the rain."

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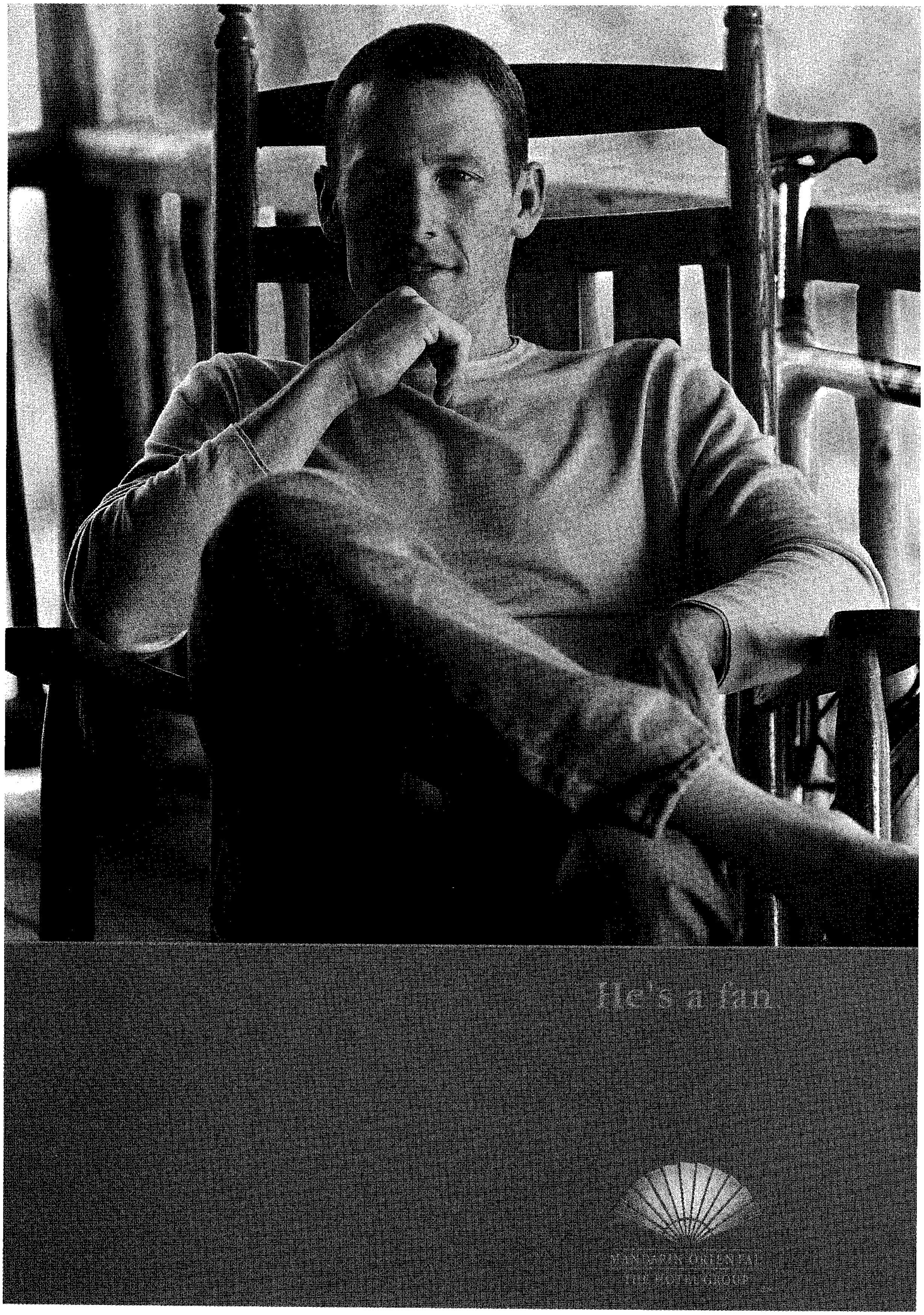
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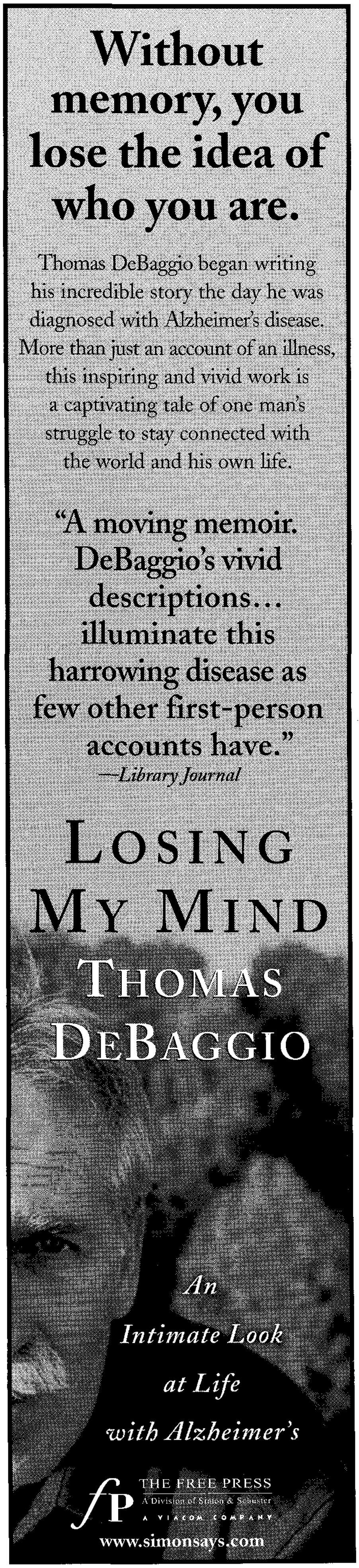

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SHARPTON'S RECKLESSNESS

Elizabeth Kolbert, in the guise of writing a balanced profile of Al Sharpton, allows him to present himself as both a charming rogue and a popular black leader ("The People's Preacher," February 18th & 25th). Once again, he is excused from taking full responsibility for the reckless choices he has made throughout his career. Sharpton says that he regrets calling the Jewish owner of Freddy's Fashion Mart, on 125th Street, a "white interloper" in the course of protests that led to eight deaths, rather than just an "interloper," but both are offensive—code words that strike up the familiar siren song of separatism. Why is it seen as a sign of authenticity when a putative civil-rights leader shocks and defies convention through racial calumny, street theatre, and publicity stunts, even—indeed, especially—when his targets are black intellectuals and professionals? Sharpton claims credibility as a grassroots leader *because* he gives the black middle class (and others who don't fit stereotypes of buffoonish black characters) the pejorative label of "Negro." And the media rewards him with the publicity that inflates his status in the black community. Sharpton does not "speak truth to power" but contributes snap sound bites—some funny, most angry and feverish—to complicated issues. Meantime, the plight of the black underclass goes virtually unchallenged.

Michael Meyers, Executive Director
John Nidiry, Asst. to the Executive Director
New York Civil Rights Coalition
New York City

Kolbert writes, with reference to Sharpton's potential candidacy (and likely loss) in the 2004 Presidential race, that, "by running, he will show not what is possible for a black man in America but, once again, what isn't." The presumption, based on Sharpton's previous forays into electoral politics, in which he garnered a huge majority of black votes but few votes from whites, is that the white majority votes on the basis of race. But Colin Powell was a favored Republican candidate for President for some time, before declaring that he wasn't interested—not to mention the obvious fact that a great number of black candidates have been elected to high political offices, in New York and elsewhere in the country. Perhaps race is not the only issue affecting Sharpton's success. And perhaps we've all come much farther than he'd like us to believe.

Frederic Wile
New York City

BALLPARK BRAVERY

Aaron Sorkin, the creator of "The West Wing," complains to Tad Friend that "we're simply pretending to believe that Bush exhibited unspeakable courage at the World Series by throwing out the first pitch at Yankee Stadium. . . . The media is waving pompoms, and the entire country is being polite" (The Talk of the Town, March 4th). If this act wasn't courageous, then what is? At an uncertain time, soon after the attacks, Bush walked out into the middle of a baseball field surrounded by fifty-five thousand people, any one of whom could have been a threat. Has Sorkin ever been in a comparable position? Sorkin, who admits that Bush has handled the crisis well, also says that "it's absolutely right that at this time we're all laying off the bubblehead jokes." He's not doing the President any favors; lately, Bush just hasn't done anything bubbleheaded.

Joseph Duh
Bridgeport, Conn.

CORRECTION: On page 63 of "The Great Terror" (March 25th), there is a reference to the destruction in Kurdistan of "some forty thousand villages" by the Iraqi Army. The correct number is four thousand.

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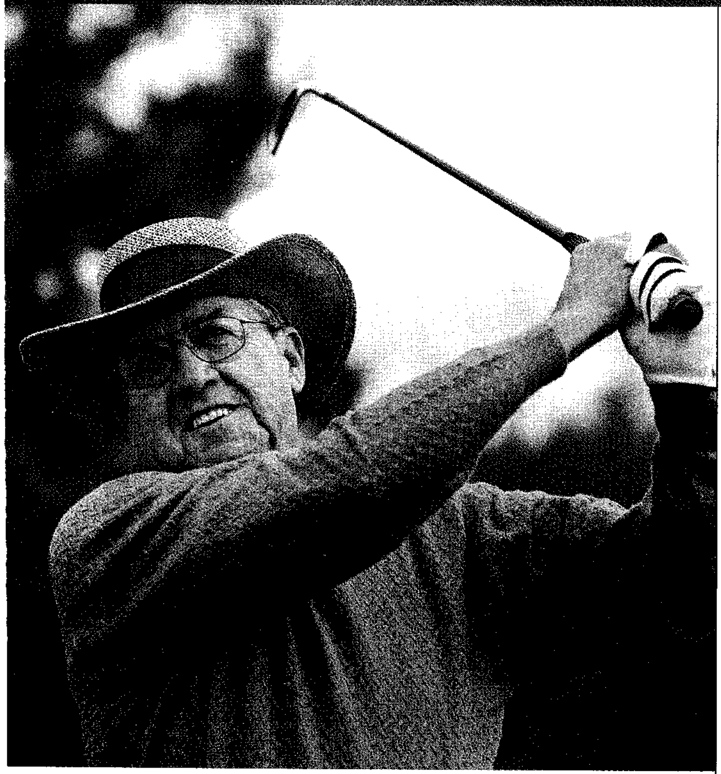

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THE ELEPHANT MAN
Billy Crudup has the title role in a revival of Bernard Pomerance's 1979 drama, directed by Sean Mathias. Kate Burton and Rupert Graves are also in the cast. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE FAB 4 REACH THE PEARLY GATES
A rock band from Liverpool must choose between reincarnation and the afterlife, in a play by the Philadelphia troupe New Paradise Laboratories. Opens March 29 at 8:30. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

FORTUNE'S FOOL
Turgenev's comedy, starring Alan Bates and Frank Langella. Arthur Penn is the director. In previews through March 31. Opens April 2 at 6:45. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE GRADUATE
From London's West End, Terry Johnson's adaptation of the 1967 film, starring Kathleen Turner, Jason Biggs, and Alicia Silverstone. Mr. Johnson is the director. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

HELEN
Tony Kushner directs Ellen McLaughlin's modern interpretation of the plight of Helen of Troy. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

MORNING'S AT SEVEN
A Lincoln Center revival of Paul Osborn's 1939 back-yard drama, starring Elizabeth Franz, Julie Hagerty, Buck Henry, Piper Laurie, Christopher Lloyd, William Biff McGuire, Estelle Parsons, Frances Sternhagen, and Stephen Tobolowsky. Daniel Sullivan is the director. Previews begin March 28. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SWIMMING WITH WATERMELONS
An American G.I. and a young Japanese woman fall in love in occupied Japan, in a play with music created by Diane Paulus, Randy Weiner, and Project 400. In previews. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303.)

TALK
In Carl Hancock Rux's play, staged by the Foundry Theatre, the life of a late black writer from the Beat era is explored by a panel of literati who knew him. Marion McClinton is the director. Previews begin March 29. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 800-965-4827.)

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE
The 1967 movie about a New York City flapper is the basis for a new musical by Dick Scanlan (book and new lyrics), the late Richard Morris (book), and Jeanine Tesori (new songs). Michael Mayer is the director. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

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TOPDOG/UNDERDOG
The Public Theatre's production of Suzan-Lori Parks's play has moved to Broadway, starring Jeffrey Wright and Mos Def. George C. Wolfe is the director. In previews. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

THE UNDERPANTS
Carl Sternheim's 1910 comedy, newly adapted by Steve Martin. Barry Edelstein is the director. In previews. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AN ALMOST HOLY PICTURE
The kinds of questions raised by Heather McDonald's limpid, well-written monologue, a meditation on the nature of faith, can't be found on CNN, which is the evening's asset. But the play's incidents are narrated, not dramatized, and that is its limitation. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/18 & 25/02.) (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300. Closes March 31.)

BEA ARTHUR ON BROADWAY: JUST BETWEEN FRIENDS
The stage and screen star performs songs and reminisces about her six-decade career, accompanied by the pianist Billy Goldenberg. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

CALABI YAU
M.T.A. workers try to build a particle accelerator in abandoned subway tunnels, in a "string-theory comedy" written by Susanna Speier and starring James Urbaniak. March 29-April 1 at 7:30. Continues through April 7. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

THE CARPETBAGGER'S CHILDREN
Jean Stapleton, Hallie Foote, and Roberta Maxwell portray three daughters of a Union soldier, in a new play by Horton Foote. Michael Wilson is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

THE CRUCIBLE
Arthur Miller's reimagining of the Salem witch-hunt of 1692, here in a masterly revival by Richard Eyre, is both a terrific melodramatic yarn that combines love interest and courtroom drama and a cunning allegory for the blacklisting delirium of the House Un-American Activities Committee; it is one of the only theatrical remnants of those craven years. Abigail Williams (the edgy, excellent Angela Bettis), an orphaned seventeen-year-old Puritan, has been seen dancing in the woods trying to cast a spell over the wife (the expert Laura Linney) of her thirty-five-year-old lover and former employer, John Proctor (Liam Neeson, who is a force of nature). Miller demonstrates the hysteric turning herself into an event in order to preserve a sense of goodness and to project her dark, violent, repressed feelings onto others. She becomes the psychological paradigm of the community. Murkiness—the crepuscular gloom of Paul Gallo's lighting—is this production's dominating atmosphere. Shards of light slant through the rough-hewn slabs of wood in Tim Hatley's brooding behemoth set, which contracts to convey the shadowy claustrophobia of Puritan habitation and expands to suggest the monumentality of the stockade. (3/18/02) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

THE DAZZLE
It's probably perfectly natural to worry that the sum of one's existence will end up being nothing more than an awful mess. In the true case of the infamous Collyer brothers, whose decaying bodies were discovered in 1947 buried beneath a lifetime collection of junk, that fear became a reality of phenomenal proportions. The terrific playwright Richard Greenberg has reimagined the brothers' fatal mistake (using love of the world's things, including knowledge, as a shield against the more painful love of humanity) with mixed results. His play is extremely long on longueurs (in the end, neurotics are actually pretty boring), but thanks to fine performances by the heretofore underrated Reg Rogers, as a concert pianist, and Peter Frechette, as his protective lawyer brother, it has numerous moments of funny-sad clarity. By adding to their history a woman (Francie Swift) who loved them both, Greenberg steers the audience toward renewed affection for the gift of existence rather than its trappings. David Warren is the director. (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

ELAINE STRITCH AT LIBERTY
In her extraordinary one-woman show (co-created with *The New Yorker's* theatre critic John Lahr), Stritchie, as Noel Coward called her, once and for all confirms her status as a living legend. As she sings songs and tells tales about the ups and downs of her long life in the theatre, she ends up capturing more than a single lifetime; her show is the synthesis of so much that is rich and rewarding and heartbreaking about life on the stage. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

FOOL FOR LOVE
Tim Corcoran's precise, insightful direction is the heart of this revival of Sam Shepard's 1984 play

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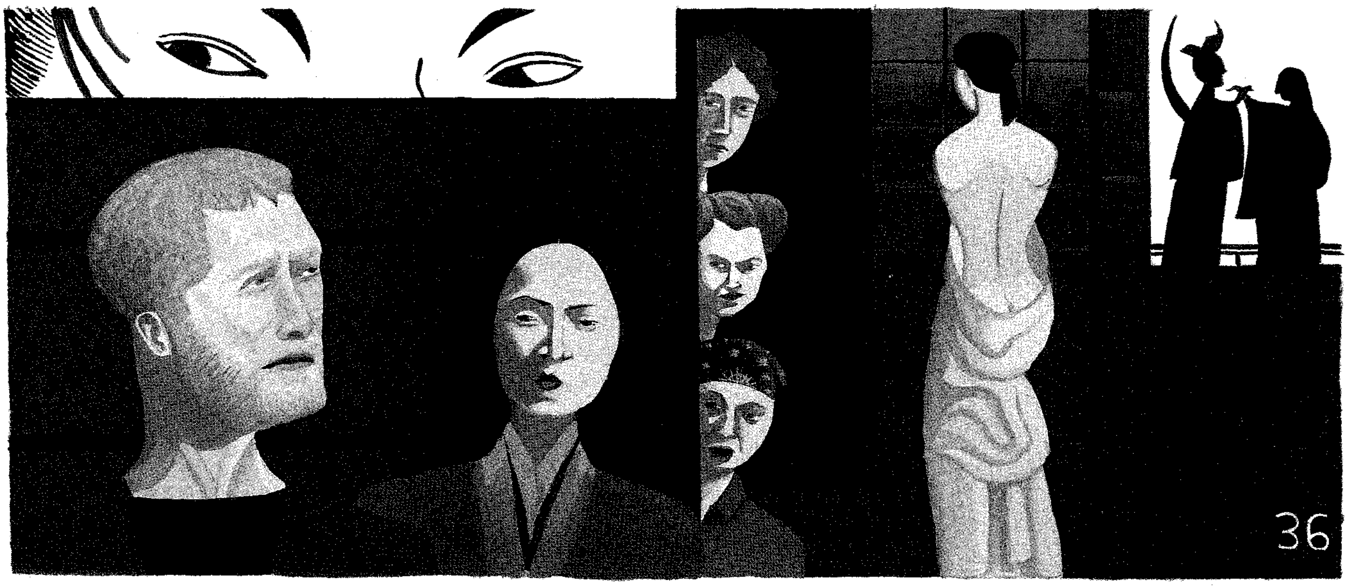


Stephen Land, Liana Pai, Rebecca Wisocky, Ebon Moss-Bachrach, and Elaine Tse, in "36 Views," by Naomi Iizuka.

about a misbegotten love. Though there is unfortunately little chemistry between the two leads, the evening's power lies mainly in the monologues, and those are superb. (29th Street Rep, 212 W. 29th St. 206-1515. Closes March 30.)

FOUR

With its stark immediacy, the twenty-six-year-old Christopher Shinn's drama outshines many other new plays being produced today. The action is set on a single day and follows the wanderings of four wounded but resilient characters, whose lives are intertwined in ways they don't know. The cast is wonderful; under Jeff Cohen's direction, they tap into the confusion and bravery of people taking tentative steps toward the kinds of human connections their circumstances have made them yearn for. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 31.)

FRANNY'S WAY

In Richard Nelson's latest play, staged by Playwrights Horizons, the lives of two teen-age sisters are transformed by a trip to Greenwich Village in 1957. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 279-4200.)

FURTHER THAN THE FURTHEST THING

In Zinnie Harris's play, which is set partly on the real and remote South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha and partly in England in 1961, a volcanic eruption wrests all the islanders away from their world of black sand and penguins and plunges them into factory life and damp employee housing. But the play is not a romanticization of a paradise lost—there is a tragedy in the island's past. In their relationship to the island and to their current circumstances, the characters are psychically caught between a rock and a hard place. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes March 31.)

THE GOAT; OR, WHO IS SYLVIA?

Left to his own devices, without society's rules or the superego's tyrannical eye, homo sapiens would shtup mud. Or so Edward Albee contends in his ninety-minute anecdote about a happily married, successful architect who falls in love with a goat called Sylvia. It takes all of Albee's expertise to tease this joke into an evening; but it allows Mercedes Ruehl some hilarious moments of high dudgeon as she trashes the house and her husband for "cruising livestock." The sex happens offstage, alas; if Mr. Albee had put his special pleading for bestiality in front of the paying customers, they'd be getting something for their top dollar. David Esbjornson is the director. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE GODFADDA WORKOUT

A one-man show written and performed by Seth Isler. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

THE LAST FIVE YEARS

This new work by the composer Jason Robert Brown ("Parade") is not really a musical per se (it has no book to speak of); it's a song cycle of charming, often funny, but not terribly memorable tunes that trace the five-year relationship of a young New York City couple. As a cocky novelist who strikes it big with his first book and a struggling actress whose career has been relegated to the regionals, the super-talented Norbert Leo Butz and Sherie René Scott do everything in their admirable power to bring the characters into sharp focus. But Brown has made the pair less than three-dimensional and set them down in a show in which they rarely interact (a device that is probably meant to highlight their inherent isolation but which instead makes it seem like they've never met). On top of it all, the audience knows from the outset that the couple is going to part ways, so there's not much here in the way of surprises. Daisy Prince is the director. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

MAMMA MIA!

This smorgasbord of song, the brainchild of Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, the male half of the seventies supergroup ABBA, is nothing but hokum—a chucklehead pleasure. Catherine Johnson's book, which is simply a slick cartoon, connects the dots between the band's No. 1 singles. (11/5/01) (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.)

MARIA DEL BOSCO (SEX & RACING CARS: A SOUND OPERA)

The avant-garde playwright Richard Foreman's fiftieth play. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

THE MATCHMAKER

In Phyllis Ryan's adaptation of John B. Keane's novella "Letters of a Matchmaker," Des Keogh and Anna Manahan portray a colorful assortment of letter writers, all of them looking for an escape from loneliness in a time and place before personal ads and Internet dating—the rural west of Ireland in the nineteen-fifties. Director Michael Scott manages to avoid the static pitfalls inherent in the format, thanks to the grand expressiveness of his actors and to the consummate blarney and great good humor at the heart of Keane's work. (Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes March 31.)

METAMORPHOSES

Ovid's tales, loosely adapted and directed by Mary Zimmerman, who has had the ingenious idea of staging the caprice of the gods in a swimming pool: water is life; it calls up associations with the unconscious, the primordial ooze, birth, and sex. The elegant, surreal playfulness of the stage picture broadcasts the tone of Zimmerman's deft direction and her vernacular reinventions. It's fun and full of wonder. But Zimmerman's charming cartoons illustrate rather than dramatize psychic struggle. Because of her scenic prowess, Zimmerman pulls the show off without getting it quite right. The swimming pool, which is the show's gimmick, turns out to be its metaphor—refreshing and shallow. (3/18/02) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

MISS EVERS' BOYS

David Feldshuh's drama, inspired by experiments that the U.S. Public Health Service performed on black men from the thirties through the seventies to determine the effects of untreated syphilis. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200. Closes April 14.)

MR. GOLDWYN

Alan King takes the stage to portray the film producer Samuel Goldwyn. (3/25/02) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

NECESSARY TARGETS

In Eve Ensler's new play, a New York psychiatrist (Shirley Knight) goes to Bosnia in 1995 to help treat the women at a refugee camp. She has arrived with all the wrong clothes and with little preparation (she thinks people in Bosnia speak Bosnian). At first, she is undone by the demands of the situation, and then is remade by what those demands bring out in her. Working with her is a tough young trauma counsellor (Catherine Kellner), who is writing a book about people in trouble spots around the world and is a one-dimensional stand-in for all coldhearted journalists who are interested only in the story, not in the people telling it. The play proceeds predictably, but Knight makes her character's transformation moving. (3/11/02) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

NOISES OFF

Jeremy Sams's revival of Michael Frayn's 1982 backstage comedy, a farce within an antic farce, is blissful fun. As the dysfunctional troupe of the travelling show "Nothing On," all the members of the excellent cast shine in roles that lesser comedians would surely find daunting. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

NO TIME FOR COMEDY

S. N. Behrman's 1939 play, about a playwright torn between the demands of his actress wife and his mistress. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-0231.)

OKLAHOMA!

Trevor Nunn's West End production of the 1943 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical comes to Broadway. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

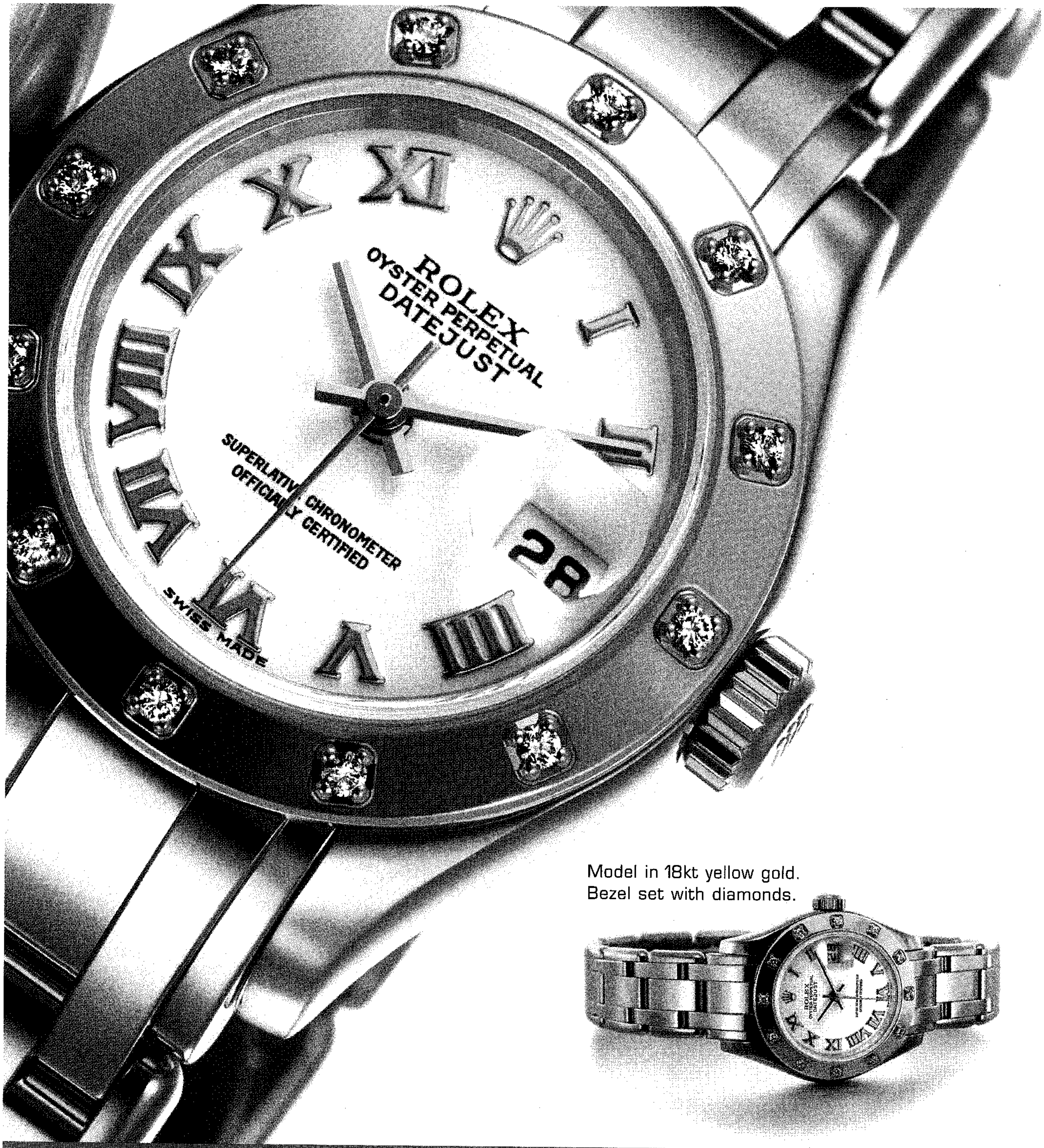
PRODIGAL

A young man leaves his small Australian home town for the big city, in a musical by Mathew Frank and Dean Bryant. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 239-6200. Closes March 31.)

QED

Peter Parnell's play, starring Alan Alda as the physicist Richard Feynman, buzzes with life. Set in

KATHY OSBORN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"Narcotically entrancing – almost impossible to put down."
–*The Baltimore Sun*

"Da Chen's voice comes from the soil of China . . . his exuberance for life and its possibilities set him apart from others in the genre."
–*Los Angeles Times*

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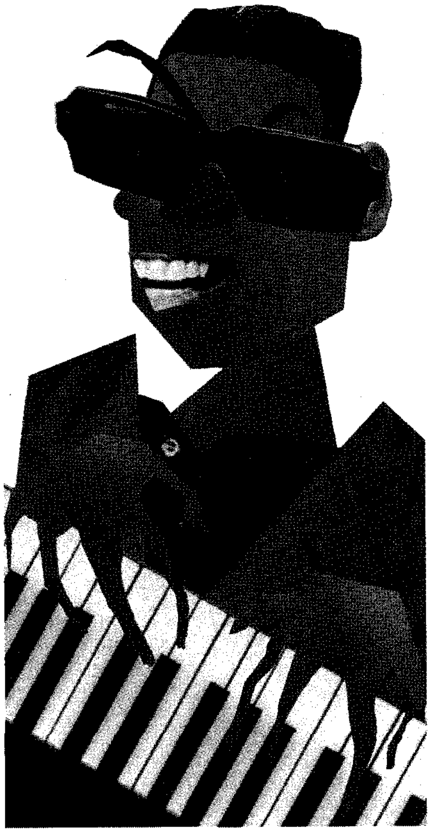
1986—the year of the Challenger explosion, whose causes Feynman helped to investigate—"QED" takes us through an afternoon and evening in Feynman's office at Caltech, where he talks about such subjects as photons, drumming, the Manhattan Project, cancer, and "South Pacific." Alda's performance, which makes much use of that scrunchy-eyed smile of his, is one of utter charm. Sundays and Mondays only. (11/26/01) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

SMELL OF THE KILL
Michele Lowe's comedy involves three wives, their three unloving husbands, and a meat locker. Christopher Ashley is the director. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



Herbie Hancock, at Irving Plaza.

STEPHEN KRONINGER

SURVIVING GRACE
A play by Trish Vradenburg, about a fraught mother-and-daughter relationship. Illeana Douglas and Doris Belack star. Jack Hofsiss directs. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-7171.)

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS
John Lithgow is the gossip columnist J. J. Hunsecker, in a musical version of the 1957 film. (3/25/02) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

36 VIEWS
Naomi Iizuka's drama about the discovery of a priceless Japanese pillow book and its effects on the academic art community. Directed by Mark Wing-Davey. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200.)

TO YOU, THE BIRDIE! (PHÈDRE)
The venerable Wooster Group's latest work, which is based on Racine's "Phèdre" and stars Frances McDormand, Kate Valk, and Willem Dafoe, has the power to remind flagging audiences of the exhilarating joys of live theatre. After more than twenty-five years, this avant-garde troupe is still modder than mod—and super smart. With typically exquisite choreography of video and sound and a wry cast, they conjure a fresh and witty take on the ancient story. It's got heartbreaking tragedy, it's got comedy, it's got scatological sex, and it's got amazing feats of badminton. What more do you really need in a play? (St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Brooklyn. 966-3651.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.
BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.
CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.
CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)
Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.
CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.
DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.
FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.
42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.
I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.
THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
LOVE, JANIS
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.
PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.
PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.
THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.
THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.
TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.
UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL
Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St.
URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

EIFMAN BALLET OF ST. PETERSBURG
It makes sense that the Russians have flocked to Boris Eifman's spectacles since his troupe's first U.S. appearance, in 1998—they fondly remember his Béjartian rock ballets from their Soviet youth. But it's less clear why everyone else, balletomanes included, has been so quick to follow. Eifman's specialty is phantasmagoric psycho-biography. "Red Giselle," for instance, is a kaleidoscope of "Giselle," "The Red Shoes," and the tragic life of the Russian ballerina and madwoman Olga Spessivtseva. "Don Quixote," an American première, combines the Cervantes story and the Petipa classic with, Eifman says, "my biography." The ballet is set in an insane asylum meant to represent the Soviet Union. Eifman trademarks include cartoonish

characters, scores cobbled together from a hodgepodge of classical sources, and choreography that moves like a series of freeze frames. So what's to like? This: when Eifman says, "I don't just tell a story, I tell the story of the soul," he doesn't flinch. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. March 27-29 at 8, March 30 at 2 and 8, and March 31 at 2 and 7. Through April 14.)

URBAN TAP
When asked about his troupe's current show, Herbin Tamango Van Cayseele patiently explains that his group is not a troupe but a gathering of free spirits and that what they create is not a show but a journey "through all art. It's about *connecting*." For the less cosmic among us, the global reach of "Full Cycle" will suffice. Urban Tap's spectacle of street dance, hoofing, ethno-jazz music, and careening video projections boasts among its free spirits an Italian trumpeter, a Brazilian capoeirista, a Tunisian vocalist, a French videographer, a New York break-dancer, a Haitian drummer, and, of course, Tamango—the event's Pied Piper, a svelte and speedy tap dancer from French Guiana by way of Paris. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 26-29 at 8.)

ANDREA KLEINE AND YASMEEN GODDER
The choreographers share a program, with Kleine contributing "Claude," about the life of the French Surrealist photographer Claude Cahun, and Godder countering with "I Feel Funny Today," a duet for a man, a woman, and two imaginary beings. (Dance Theatre Workshop at the Duke, 229 W. 42nd St. 924-0077. March 28-30 at 8 and March 31 at 3.)

"U.S.-JAPAN ENCOUNTER IN DANCE"
Headlong Dance Theatre and the choreographic team of Sara Pearson and Patrik Widrig share the stage with Japanese soloists Ko Murobushi, Takeshi Yazaki, Yasuko Yokoshi, Satoshi Haga, and Akiko Furukawa for an evening of seven premières. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. March 30 at 7.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

DREAM THEATER
The band's reputation suffered slightly last fall when ill-timed cover art on a new live disk depicted a burning New York skyline. The first edition of that album, which came out on September 11th, was recalled immediately. The band now returns to promote their latest opus, the critically lauded "Six Degrees of Inner Turmoil." Expect one of their signature marathons, with a bit of extra passion. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 27-28 at 8.)

DIANA KRALL
An honest-to-goodness jazz artist's latest album goes platinum, and then she sells out a headlining weekend at Radio City. Who do we have to thank? If Krall's "The Look of Love" comes off fluffier than her earlier recordings, it's still the work of an authentic and individual singer who hasn't gone pop on us quite yet. Krall's remarkable success may be a fluke, but if she alerts her many listeners to the glories of pre-rock songwriting, more power to her. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. March 29-30 at 8.)

ART ALEXAKIS
While his celebrated alternative trio Everclear takes a brief hiatus, Art Alexakis, who was once heralded as the songwriter to watch by Kurt Cobain, launches a solo tour to perform Everclear favorites and give new songs a live airing. (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. April 1 at 8.)

JOE STRUMMER
The former front man and gritty raconteur of the Clash makes the transatlantic hop, along with his current band, the Mescaleros, for five nights at the cavernous St. Ann's Warehouse, their only shows in the States. Continuing where "Sandinista!" and "Combat Rock" left off, the Mescaleros, a kind of emphatic punk-rock/world-music outfit, traffic in sounds from all over the map ("witch-doctor bells," Jamaican dub grooves, and Celtic fiddles, for example), and, as on those two great albums, these influences are placed in context and augment rather than overwhelm the songwriting. Most refreshing are the intelligent, politically conscious lyrics. (38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. April 1-2 at 8. Through April 6.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—March 28: The flat-picking guitar master **Doc Watson.** March 29: The bassist **Tony Levin** is idolized by fellow-instrumentalists the world over for his nimble expertise on both the bass and the enigmatic Chapman stick. Levin, who won his greatest fame playing for both Peter Gabriel and King Crimson, has lent his talents to everyone from Burt Bacharach to Laurie Anderson. Now fronting his own band, the bald-headed one performs numbers from his own albums, as well as the odd Crimson track to sate the faithful.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—March 28: The French duo **Rinôçérôse** fuses slick guitar work and up-to-date dance beats. March 29-30: Abandoning the screechy attack of her incendiary riot-grrrl band, Bikini Kill, Kathleen Hanna takes a completely different approach with her band **Le Tigre,** swapping noise for a poppier, drum-machine-fuelled sound. The feminist agenda remains intact. April 1: **Angélique Kidjo,** who was born in Benin and now lives in Paris and Brooklyn, is a fiery performer with

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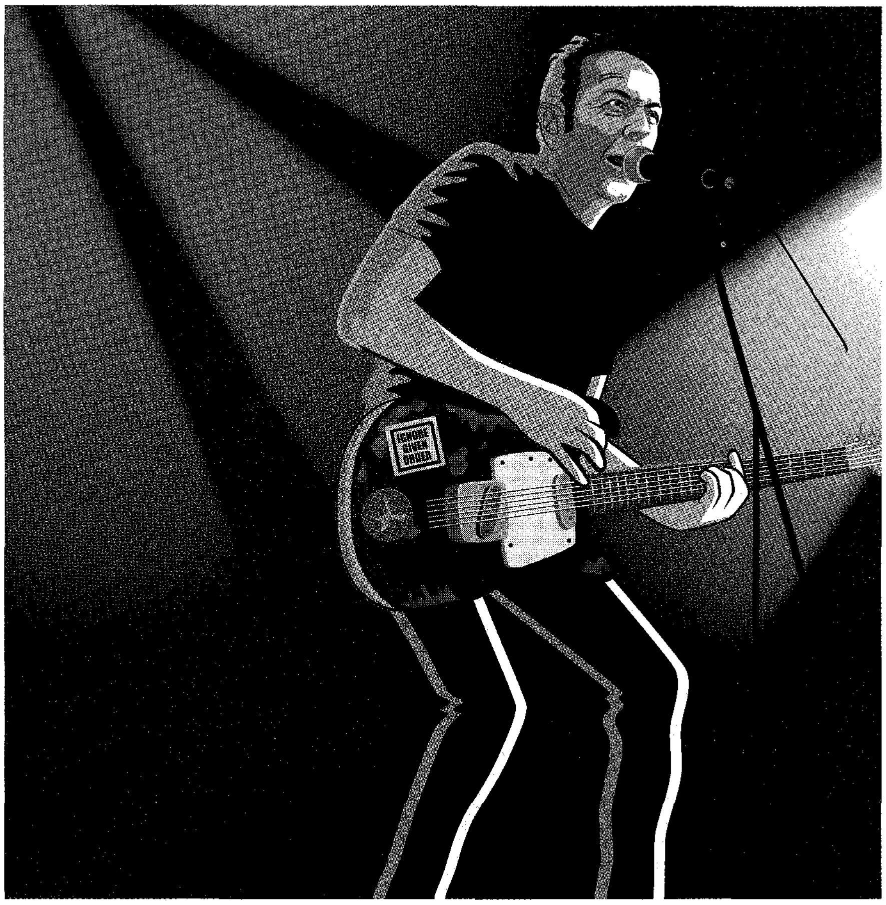

Joe Strummer and the Mescaleros headline a five-night stand at St. Ann's Warehouse.

a wonderful voice. She'll be performing songs from her forthcoming album, "Black Ivory Soul," which mixes the music of Bahia with her West African roots. Guest songwriters on the release include Carlinhos Brown and Vinicius Cantuaria.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—March 27: The seminal keyboardist **Herbie Hancock** digs into the contemporary dance-music scene, the fertile ground that gave fruit to "Future Shock," his 1983 triumph with the producer Bill Laswell. On his latest album, "Future 2 Future," he collaborates with Laswell, and Carl Craig, Rob Swift, and other stars of the twenty-first-century A.M. hours. March 30: The pedal steel guitarist **Robert Randolph** brings in his family band.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 30: The Denver foursome **Dressy Bessy** makes feel-good pop rooted in the AM-radio sound of the sixties. Fuzzy guitars, shimmering vocals (delivered with glee by Tammy Ealom), and sweetly innocent lyrics make their latest release, "Sound Go Round" a welcome delight.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—March 29 and April 1: Not the first band (and probably not the last) to revisit the lonely, high-volume despair of Neil Young's electric work, Louisville's **My Morning Jacket** still manages to make affecting rock-and-roll music; the singer Jim James holds notes until they collapse under the weight of reverbed guitar. Country rock dominates their live show. Also on the bill is **Swearing at Motorists.** For a man whose aggressive facial hair and energetic stage presence suggest extreme leanings, Dave Doughman, who comprises half of this Dayton, Ohio, group, produces surprisingly tuneful rock. The former Guided by Voices soundman gets by with dependable guitar hooks and a soaring voice. April 2: Born in Wales, raised in Brittany, and currently living in New York City and Dublin, **Katell Keineg** has a voice with as wide a range as her background—a beautiful and wild soprano.

NORTHSIX
66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—March 31: **My Morning Jacket** and **Swearing at Motorists** (see the Mercury Lounge).

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—March 28: San Francisco's **Tin Hat Trio** performs a live soundtrack to silent films by Ladislaw Starewicz, a pioneer of stop-motion animation. March 30: The intrepid downtown guitar hero **Marc Ribot** and his band **Los Cubanos Postizos** travel to the musical era of pre-Castro Cuba, bumping and grinding through bilingual songs with all the wonderful élan of an old Chevrolet on the dusty streets of present-day Havana. **Faun Fables** play their eerie, Appalachian-tinged confessionals at midnight.

WARSAW
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-5252)—March 28: London's Warp Records is known for its roster of idiosyncratic and intimidating electronic-music artists. The duo **Plaid,** a mainstay of the label, pulls in dancers and thinkers alike with familiar-seeming melodies and large, regular beats. With the minimalist composer and producer **Nobukazu Takemura.** April 2: The charmingly enigmatic singer Chan Marshall, who goes by the name **Cat Power.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through March 30: In "Scandals and Follies," a marvellous new show celebrating musical revues from 1902 to 1952, **KT Sullivan** proves herself as vocally, comically, and theatrically assured as contemporary cabaret performers get. She also receives perfect support from the pianist and singer Larry Woodard, whose witty numbers nearly steal the show. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through March 31: The stylish Cuban diva **Albita** moved to the States nearly ten years ago, and since then she's attracted a following right out of "Entertainment Tonight." Madonna, Gianni Versace, Sylvester Stallone, and Gloria Estefan all caught her regular, mid-nineties shows at the Centro Vasco restaurant, in Miami. Despite the celebrity appeal, Albita's heart lies with the earthy Cuban roots music known as *son.*

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (339-4095)—Through March 30: **Monica Mancini** doesn't always rely on material drawn from the cache of film theme hits written by her father, Henry Mancini, but when she does, this nuanced vocalist can make quite the evening of it. "Mancini at the Movies" will call on such superb songs as "Moon River," "The Days of Wine and Roses," "Two for the Road," and "Charade."

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through March 31: Graceful and gutsy in equal parts, the **Heath Brothers** quartet, featuring the saxophonist Jimmy, the bassist Percy, and the drummer Albert (Tootie), remains a paragon of sibling unity, one of current jazz's classic small groups. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through March 31: The **John Abercrombie** quartet. The guitarist Abercrombie is in good company with the violinist **Mark Feldman,** who delivered stunning work on Abercrombie's "Open Land" (1999) and his brand-new "Cat 'n' Mouse." Whether waxing ethereal and impressionistic or crunching out passages with post-fusion aplomb, both of these exceptional instrumentalists remain on the same audacious wavelength. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through March 31: The **Mark Turner** quartet. Turner, a tenor saxophonist whose unlikely blend of influences, from cool school to sixties expressionist, has afforded him a distinct instrumental voice, is lately taking new roads. He's usually heard in tandem with the guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel; here Turner mixes it up with the imaginative pianist **Ethan Iverson**—a welcome change that can only set off Turner's prodigious talents in greater relief. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence."** Through June 19. ♦ **"Surrealism: Desire Unbound"** is a big, fairly resistible show, with scattered delights, that labors to pump up the long-deflated blimp of Surrealism with a panting emphasis on sex. There's fine work by Picasso, Miró, and Giacometti, but the more orthodox dream illustrations of Dali, Ernst, and so on look more tired than ever. The show's strong suits are erotic photography and drawing; its man of the hour is Hans Bellmer, the weird German whose indelibly shocking photos of anatomically preposterous female dolls are back in vogue these days. Through May 5. ♦ **"Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi: Father and Daughter Painters in Baroque Italy."** Virtually the only woman painter among the fraternity of Old Masters, Artemisia Gentileschi has inspired novels, films, and a current play, thanks in part to speculation about her romantic misfortunes. She was a painter of great and often grisly refinement, as this dual survey makes clear. Like Caravaggio, who inspired their realist style, the Gentileschis didn't skimp on skin, gold, velvet, or violence; Artemisia's depiction of Judith modelling a low-cut blue gown as she beheads a struggling Holofernes is a cleavage picture in both senses. Through May 12. ♦ **"Earthly Bodies: Irving Penn's Nudes, 1949-50."** Through April 21. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting."** Gerhard Richter has worked in

MICHAEL WELDON

many styles since 1961, when he escaped from East Germany. They include mordant variations on Pop art, hauntingly beautiful Photo-Realist paintings in several genres, abstracts that convey self-doubt with panache, and a fifteen-canvas masterpiece of history painting, about the deaths in 1977 of Baader-Meinhof terrorists who had convulsed Germany for a decade. Previously seen piecemeal here, his art has struck many as tricky and cold, but it turns out that it aches with emotion. Richter's love of painting, in a tense relationship with his fierce skepticism, generates sustained intellectual drama with regular bonuses of rapture. This show may redraw the map of painting's place in the wider culture. Through May 21. ♦ **"Life of the City."** The museum offers a belated and somewhat misguided valentine to New York City in a show that combines photographs of the city from the permanent collection with an ever-changing installation of images solicited from amateurs. (Guidelines for participation are detailed in an attendant brochure.) Through May 21. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—After the black walls and visual cacophony of the Brazilian extravaganza that precedes it, Rachel Whiteread's massive sculptural installation fills the museum's top-floor galleries like a silent lament. Whiteread is an impresario of the inside out, and here she's cast the interior of her London studio and home, a fifties-era building that previously served as a synagogue and a warehouse. The resulting behemoth, which invokes both the sacred and the mundane, is devoid of architectural detail, except for the occasional heating duct or electrical outlet. The effect is at once obdurate and illusory. A second, smaller sculpture is more of a visual quip: a cast of the stairs to the building's basement, it looks like a ziggurat on a bender. Through June 5. ♦ **"Brazil: Body and Soul."** Through May 29. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The 2002 Biennial is a vast, pleasant, rather drab affair, made up of predominantly earnest, unambitious works by a hundred and thirteen artists and collaborative teams on four floors of the museum and in Central Park, where you can find a fifty-foot steel elm tree. The show's New Age-ish curator Lawrence R. Rinder declares that today's young American artists crave "some greater role than mere decoration or ironic critique." His Biennial bunch achieves something decidedly lesser, on the whole, with gimmicky audio and computer works, self-indulgent installations, and a great many unsurprising video projections. ("Vita brevis, video longa," one observer remarked.) Serious painting and sculpture are scarce. Momentary relief arrives in the form of memorable things by Vija Celmins, Chan Chao, Stephen Dean, and Lorna Simpson. Through May 26. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5800)—**"Latin American Fashion,"** a graduate-student-curated exhibit (soberly subtitled "Exploring Identities on the New York Runway"), skips recent Latino influence in street fashion to follow a fainter trail through couture, from forties-era embroidered suits to sheer lacy blouses of the recent fin de siècle. Occasional provincial pieces, including a beaded cotton print suit from Lila Bath, a woman described as "the Coco Chanel of Acapulco," and contemporary work from Elisa Jimenez, whose "Gold Leafed Denim Priestess Skirt Yin Yang" applies gilding directly to the wearer's midriff and breasts, offer welcome blasts of heat. Through April 13. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—**"Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art,"** an exhibition of works that rely on Nazi-era imagery, created by popular young artists such as Elke Krystufek, Mat Collishaw, and Tom Sachs, lets museumgoers debate whether the pieces are closer to "Shoah" or show-and-tell. Through June 30. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

FRANZ KLINE
This small but exuberant selection of postwar ink-and-brush drawings showcases Kline's experimental marks and their tense, balletic relationship to white space and the dimensions of the page. The standard Ab Ex vernacular of rough, calligraphic spontaneity is writ large. Especially in the later pieces, his inks have a heroic and architectural quality, as if Kline were sketching bridges and girders starkly silhouetted against blank city skies—drawings made on pages ripped from the Manhattan phone book reinforce the impression that the whole show is meant as a love note to New York. Through April 20. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951.)

CAMERON MARTIN
A stark, beautiful show of reductive landscape paintings. Martin strips nature down to essentials—trees, water, rocks—devoting each canvas to a single subject. Sky has a recurring cameo, too, sneaking in as the flat field of lemon surrounding a truncated plane tree or shimmering alongside a rock pile. One by one the pictures convey both the ache of isolation

TABLES FOR TWO

ANNISA
13 Barrow St. (741-6699)—"Annisa," roughly translated, is Arabic for "woman." At this American-fusion West Village refuge the gimmick, if there is one, is femininity (Arabia has nothing to do with it). The wines all come from women vintners, the pretty décor is minimalist Martha Stewart, and the glass oil lamps on the tables look a bit like silicone breast implants. In the wrong hands this kind of thing could get annoying—it's so San Francisco. But Annisa's co-owners, Jennifer Scism and the chef Anita Lo, make it work, with clever cuisine and low-key charm.

The elevated dining area is small but manages to seem spacious: it has spare, cream-colored walls, simple arrangements of white tuberoses and Casablanca lilies, recessed lighting, and just enough room between tables for the waiters to give diners useful advice without being overheard. Upon delivering one appetizer, a plate of soup dumplings topped with wedges of foie gras (which are outstanding), the waiter strongly urged that they be eaten with a Chinese soupspoon, because the dumplings were full of broth. "No obligation," he said, "but trust me." He also reported that Martha Stewart herself comes in a lot, and always orders the miso-marinated sable and tofu in a bonito broth.

Not everything on the menu is so precious. After a while the waiter came in from the kitchen and announced that although there was one remaining piece of Arctic char the chef had deemed it unworthy. A quick second look at the menu resulted in a substitute order of braised pork belly with clams and "giant white beans," a brave combination, so odd it had to be good. As it turned out, it was chewy, wintry, and interesting, but not exactly ideal, and the pork orderer spent the rest of the evening raiding his friends' plates—in a manly way, of course. The other main courses were excellent: a buttery cut of cod; a sautéed skate filet, fanned out around a big marrow-filled veal bone; and a roasted chicken, stuffed with chanterelles and pig's feet, that didn't taste like chicken. The desserts are also great, the apple tart in particular, and the chick wine is damn fine. (Open Mondays through Saturdays for dinner only. Entrées $22-$29.)

—*Nick Paumgarten*

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AND: A calendar of *New Yorker* events across the country

and the rapture of solitude. Through April 20. (Artemis Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 445-0444.)

DEVORAH SPERBER

The show's title, "Bikinis, Bandanas, and a VW Bus," sounds like a bad network sitcom, and the sculptures, distorted representations of hippie accoutrements, are nearly as glib. In the main gallery a four-sided shower curtain is covered with sixty thousand colored stickers; the pattern transforms into a pixelated image of a psychedelic van when viewed in one of the convex mirrors installed around the room. In the adjacent space, by similar means, thousands of pushpins create representations of Old Glory bikinis and red-and-blue bandannas. Sperber's craftsmanship has an undeniable gee-whiz factor, but her intended critique of counterculture capitalism falls flat. Through April 6. (James Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767.)

Short List

NANCY GRAVES

Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550.
Through April 27.

DAVID HOCKNEY

Richard Gray, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St.
472-8787. Through April 6.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

OLIVER HERRING

The German-born New Yorker presents "Little Dances of Misfortunes," a series of enchanting performance videos. To charming music, dancers whose bodies bear swaths of phosphorescent paint move and pose in attitudes that are part cartoonish, part sculptural. As lights go on and off, the work's formal aspect shifts between friezelike and abstract-painterly. Gravity takes a vacation. You may begin to believe that the dancers truly are just inches high and that they are governed by the physics of an alternate universe, boxed in the TV monitors. Herring, who is best known for glitzy, poignant sculpture in knitted Mylar strips, hits his stride as the Diaghilev of a thimble theatre. Through March 30. (Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999.)

T. J. WILCOX

The artist abandons the poetry of his earlier film projections in favor of the slickness of digital video. Wilcox sacrifices mechanical magic—the sprockety sound, the flickering light—but the flamboyance of cinema is still at the heart of his work. The show's centerpiece is a surprisingly lacklustre paean to fandom and the yen for fame, a pastiche of "Rocky Horror Picture Show" zealots caught strutting in front of midnight screenings from Tacoma to Paris. Through April 13. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100.)

Short List

UGO RONDINONE

Matthew Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.
Through April 20.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

WIM DELVOYE

Wim Delvoye's "Marble Floors" appear to be just that—large color photographs of inlaid baroque and Islamic stonework patterns, shot head on in crisp focus and concentrating on geometric delicacies and rosy hues. Except that Delvoye's veined and shiny marbles are actually slices of lunch meat: ham, salami, and bologna, precision cut and laid out as mosaics. The work is an elaborate one-liner, with a little paradox on the side: flesh becomes stone, and cold artisanry turns into a practical joke (imagine dancing on them). "Marble Floors" runs concurrently with Delvoye's "Cloaca" at the New Museum, a pristine machine for turning food into the ultimate Freudian art product. Through April 27. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. 431-3685.)

JOCKUM NORDSTRÖM

There's a manic sweetness to these collages, watercolors, and pencil drawings by the Swedish artist, who gently inserts awkward sexual couplings into carefully rendered scenes of birds in the trees, housing projects, or wonky furniture. Like a schoolboy perfecting his cartooning, Nordström draws the same wispy tree, the same white apartment block, the same rodent-faced man or lady with her pants down over and over, until the motifs coalesce into a kind of folktale. Also on view are a series of works by Martin Kippenberger, casually virtuosic scribbles done on stationery from various international hotels. Through March 30. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

Short List

VANESSA BEECROFT

Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster St. 343-7300.
Through April 27.

NANCY BURSON

Grey Art Gallery, 100 Washington Sq. E.
998-6780. Through April 20.

ELLEN GALLAGHER

Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166.
Through April 18.

PHOTOGRAPHY

ALFRED EISENSTAEDT

Eisenstaedt, the photographer of the famous V-J Day kiss in Times Square, shot for sixty years for *Life* magazine all over the world. This greatest-hits exhibit, with memorable images of the Kennedys, Marlene Dietrich, and Josephine Baker, is a bit of a guilty pleasure. His softie journalism leaves one feeling misty for bygone eras. Two images called "A Soldier's Farewell," offering a little-seen glimpse of the old Penn Station (along with the soldier and the girl he's leaving behind), epitomize what Eisenstaedt does best. Through April 6. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051.)

RICHARD MISRACH

The twenty-fourth installment of Misrach's "Desert Canto" series in nearly as many years is stunning. The current batch was taken in Nevada's Carson Sink, in an area that floods every decade or so, and its images of a watery desert landscape connect sky, sand, and water in a way that seems positively unearthly. In one sequence, the shifting light captured in print after print makes the same dune almost unrecognizable. Misrach's huge color prints create a majestic vision of a world acting strangely. Through April 27. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600.)

LISETTE MODEL

Model came to New York for a visit in the late thirties and stayed a lifetime. The city became her muse. Most of these photographs, taken in jazz clubs in the fifties, have never been shown to the public. And the exuberant images—of Ella Fitzgerald or Louis Armstrong belting, of Willie (the Lion) Smith chomping a cigar at the piano, of a woman in an evening gown lost in thought next to Stan Getz—will appeal to both jazz and photography fans. Through April 27. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

KRAPPY KAMERA EXHIBITION

Henri Cartier-Bresson once said, "It is by great economy of means that one arrives at simplicity of expression." No means are more economical than the cameras used here: a Time-Life giveaway promo, a homemade pinhole camera, and a pink no-focus "Barbie-Cam." Getting back to the basics of light and shadow, these photographers prove how modestly wondrous photography can be. In particular, still-lifes by Cristina Ochagavia—featuring an unusual flower or a rakish shadow against a

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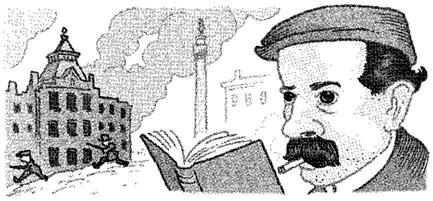

TONY MILLIONAIRE

Dublin burned, British troops and Irish separatists exchanged gunfire and artillery shells, and about two hundred and thirty civilians were killed during Easter week in Ireland in 1916. As Tim Pat Coogan writes in **1916: THE EASTER RISING** (Cassell/Sterling), the rebel leader James Connolly, injured and confined to the Irish Volunteer headquarters after a few days of bloody fighting, passed the time reading a detective novel. During a rare quiet moment, Connolly dryly remarked, "A book like this, plenty of rest and an insurrection—all at the same time. This certainly is revolution de luxe." Out in the streets, his militia battled to take the city, fighting with a bravery that has been repeatedly eulogized since. Within a week, the group was forced to surrender, and, like most of the leaders of the rebellion, Connolly himself was executed.

Into this turbulent landscape Jamie O'Neill casts the heroes of his historical novel, **AT SWIM, TWO BOYS** (Scribner), whose title is a play on the title of Flann O'Brien's landmark Irish comic novel "At Swim-Two-Birds." This story takes place in the year leading up to the Easter Rising and investigates the complicated weave of alliances in Ireland; the two Dublin boys struggle not only with their political affiliations but with their religious and sexual identities.

W. B. Yeats spoke to Ireland's scars of strife, famously noting in "Easter, 1916" that, after the Rising, "All changed, changed utterly: / A terrible beauty is born." A new volume of Yeats's essays, **WRITINGS ON IRISH FOLKLORE, LEGEND AND MYTH** (Penguin), examines ancient tales of the land—an Ireland bewitched by "sociable fairies," the banshee, and the medieval warrior Cuchulain. In fables, Yeats writes, mortals are transformed into "perfect symbols of the sorrow and beauty and of the magnificence and penury of dreams."

—*Lauren Porcaro*

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Short List

PETER FISCHLI AND DAVID WEISS
Matthew Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through April 20.

SIMEN JOHAN
Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 414-0370. Through April 6.

HELEN LEVITT
Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930. Through April 13.

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG
Pace MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Through April 6.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art.

The Sante Fe Chamber Music Festival presents music inspired by the songs of birds, beginning March 31 at the 92nd Street Y.

RICHARD MC GUIRE

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

CHRISTIE'S
March 27 at 10 A.M.: Part I of a sale of the Forbes collection of American historical documents, assembled by the late Malcolm S. Forbes. Among the highlights of the collection—which includes material relating to every U.S. President from Washington to Reagan—are an autograph manuscript of Abraham Lincoln's last public speech (estimated to bring up to two million dollars), the pair of opera glasses Lincoln carried with him the night he was assassinated, and a draft of Albert Einstein's letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt concerning the development of nuclear weapons. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
"Madama Butterfly," with Daniela Dessì, Jane Bunnell, Fabio Armiliato, and William Shimell; Marco Armiliato is the conductor. (March 27 at 8 and March 30 at 1:30.) ♦ The final performance of **"Parade,"** a revival of John Dexter's delightful triple bill of French music theatre from 1981. David Hockney's wacky sets—little more than painted flats—have retained their jovial innocence, as have his designs for the other two works, Ravel's "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges" (which the composer began with his librettist, Colette, in 1918) and Satie's ballet "Parade," a jazz-flecked vignette of life on a Parisian boulevard circa 1917 (which features a star turn from the New York City Ballet's Damian Woetzel, as the Harlequin). All, in their way, celebrate the saucy and the surreal in the shadow of war. Also with Emily Pulley, Danielle de Niese, Ruth Ann Swenson, Mark Oswald, and Earle Patriarco; James Levine. (March 28 at 8.) ♦ **"Rigoletto,"** with Swenson, Ramón Vargas, and Carlo Guelfi (in the title role); Marco Guidarini. (March 29 at 8 and April 2 at 7:30.) ♦ Franco Zeffirelli's staging of **"Falstaff"**—the closing production at the old Metropolitan Opera House in 1964—returns to the company with refurbished sets, new costumes (based on Zeffirelli's original sketches), and much fanfare. The casting of Bryn Terfel, almost too young for the title role, promises that this tale of randy old Sir John's Indian summer will have plenty of bounce; Camilla Tilling, a young Swedish soprano of unusual serenity and poise, sings the role of Nanetta in her first appearances at the Met. Also with Marina Mescheriakova, Stephanie Blythe, Susanne Mentzer, Gregory Turay, Dwayne Croft, and Jean-Paul Fouchécourt; Levine. (March 30 at 8.) ♦ The first Met performance of Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's **"Sly"**—originally mounted at the Washington Opera in 1999, as a vehicle for José Carreras—is the operatic curiosity of the season. The composer, always well liked for his diverting comic operas, here attempted a tragic work—loosely based on the induction from "The Taming of the Shrew"—and its defenders find it surprisingly powerful. One is Marta Domingo, wife of the tenor Plácido, and director of the Washington production, who makes her Met début; her estimable husband takes the title role. Also with Maria Guleghina and Juan Pons; Armiliato. (April 1 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
"Tosca," with Anna Shafajinskaia, Carlo Ventre, and Jeffrey Kneebone; Steven Mosteller conducts. (March 28 and April 2 at 7:30 and March 30 at 1:30.) ♦ **"Carmen,"** with Paula Rasmussen, Elena Kolganova, William Joyner, and Brian Davis; George Manahan. (March 29 at 8 and March 31 at 1:30.) ♦ Thor Steingraber's new staging of **"Don Giovanni"** is in the best City Opera tradition—a simple set of classical arches, period costumes, and a strong, young ensemble cast. Amy Burton, a longtime favorite in lyric and soubrette roles, sings her first Donna Elvira; Peter Coleman-Wright is a smooth and sinister Don; and Nathan Berg brings the warmth and color of a lieder singer to the role of Leporello. Also with Alexandrina Pendatchanska, Mariateresa Magisano, Raul Hernandez, and Kevin Burdette; Manahan. (March 30 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 307-4100.)

AMATO OPERA
The feisty East Village chamber-opera company presents **"Rigoletto."** (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. March 29-30 at 7:30.)

OPERAWORKS: "THE GLASS MENAGERIE"
The innovative (and irreverent) chamber company presents the first American production of the opera by Antonio Bibalo, one of Europe's leading operatic composers. These are the final performances. (78th Street Theatre Lab, 236 W. 78th St. 873-9050. March 27 and March 29-30 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

CHOIR OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
The choir of their Cambridge neighbor King's College may be more cannily promoted, but St. John's College also boasts a formidable (and ancient) chapel choir of men and boys, which for many years recorded on the Decca label and, under the longtime leadership of George Guest, cultivated a more robust, masculine sound. Their current director, Christopher Robinson, brings them to New York for the first time in more than a decade with a program of music by Parsons (the lucid, mystical "Ave Maria"), Tallis, Poulenc, Walton, Philip Moore ("Three Prayers of Dietrich Bonhoeffer"), and others. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 51st St. 378-0248. March 27 at 7:30.)

CONCERTS AT THE CLOISTERS: POMERIUM
Alexander Blachly's superb thirteen-voice choir opens a new concert series, "Italy in the Middle Ages," with music by such composers as Landini, Du Fay, and Monteverdi. (Fort Tryon Park. 650-2290. March 30 at 1 and 3.)

MANHATTAN CHAMBER SINFONIA
Jerzy Semkow conducts the Manhattan School of Music's élite smaller orchestra in a big-time pro-

gram: Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony and Bruckner's Symphony No. 7 in E Major. (Borden Auditorium, Broadway at 122nd St. March 30 at 8. No tickets required.)

"HANDEL: BEYOND THE MESSIAH"
The great works of George Frideric Handel do not exactly suffer in obscurity, but this new series of concerts, which continues through April 28, will give audiences a heightened sense of his musical diversity and expressive scope. March 30 at 8: René Jacobs's conducting has been deeply informed by his experience as a countertenor, giving his interpretations an exceptional elasticity and bloom. In the first of two concerts, he leads London's Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in a program of Handel concertos for strings and winds, including the "Fireworks" Concerto in D Major, his last. ♦ March 31 at 3: Jacobs and the orchestra return for Handel's final oratorio, "Jephtha," an emotionally complex work written while the composer was beginning to go blind. The singers include Rosemary Joshua, Patricia Bardon, Michael Chance, D'Arcy Bleiker, and the choir of Clare College, Cambridge. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500.) ♦ **Note:** Lincoln Center also hosts a Handel symposium on March 30 at 2, with a number of distinguished experts. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building. Free to all festival ticket holders.)

RECITALS

ROULETTE
The downtown performance space continues its spring series of experimental music. March 27: Intense, austere low-tech electronica from the New Zealand composer Dion Workman. ♦ March 28: Chris Forsyth and Ernesto Diaz-Infante push the envelope of guitar sound with screwdrivers, bells, and extreme alternate tunings, not to mention the trusty old volume pedal and distortion box. ♦ March 29: Another composer-guitarist, Carter Thornton, brings along some friends to explore the role of memory in music. ♦ March 30: James Fei, a protégé of such fringe masters as Anthony Braxton and Alvin Lucier, presents four new works for his alto-saxophone quartet and "idling electronic components." (228 W. Broadway, at White St. 219-8242. All performances begin at 8:30.)

BARGEMUSIC
March 28-29 at 7:30: The intellectual complexity of Elliott Carter's music may hark back to the work of his mentor Charles Ives, but its lucid rationality indicates an affection for things French. In the first of two programs coördinated by Fred Sherry, the cellist groups Carter's "Four Lauds" (played by the violinist Rolf Schulte) with two Gallic masterpieces, Messiaen's twelve-tone study "Île de Feu II" (with the pianist Stephan Gosling) and Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello. The sonata, for all its glory, has become a rather too prominent feature of Bargemusic's recent concerts, but the inclusion of Charles Wuorinen's Piano Trio—which, like the Ravel, features some bristling major-minor harmonies—will place it in a refreshing new context. ♦ March 30 at 7:30 and March 31 at 4: The violinist Scott St. John and the pianist William Wolfram join Sherry for a traditional program of Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, and Schubert (the Piano Trio in B-Flat Major, Op. 99). (Fulton Ferry Landing. 718-624-2083.)

SANTA FE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL: "ART IN NATURE—NATURE IN ART"
The songs of birds, which have probably influenced the musical creations of humans since the beginning of time, are the special emphasis of the festival's thirtieth-anniversary tour; the musicians include the pianist Marc Neikrug and the violinist Benny Kim. March 31 at 3: Vivaldi's exuberant Concerto in D Major ("The Goldfinch") opens this program, but if any composer deserves pride of place it's surely Messiaen, who went beyond mere imitation and absorbed the irregular phrasings, tonal complexities, and colorful timbres of birdsong into the essence of his style. "The Woodlark," an excerpt from his "Catalogue d'Oiseaux" (a happy tribute to the birds of France), graces the concert, along with works by Terry Riley (the psychedelic "Mythic Birds Waltz"), and Dvořák (the Piano Quintet in A Major). ♦ April

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1 at 8: More Messiaen and Dvořák (the "American" Quartet, which quotes the melody of the scarlet tanager), along with works by Doppler and Takemitsu and a selection of Native American melodies played by the flutist Tara Helen O'Connor. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500.)

AMERICAN STRING QUARTET
The première of Curt Cacioppo's "A Distant Voice Calling," inspired by a Navajo creation story, is the highlight of the group's latest concert, which also includes works by Schubert and Brahms (the Sextet in B-Flat Major, with the violist Michael Tree and the cellist David Soyer). (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. 749-2802, ext. 4428. April 1 at 8.)

BRUCE LEVINGSTON
Premiere Commission, a new organization devoted to the commissioning of contemporary music, presents the pianist in the first performance of Curtis Curtis-Smith's "Études," along with works by Debussy, Brahms, Schubert (the "Wanderer" Fantasy), and Webern. (Alice Tully Hall. 721-6500. April 1 at 8.)

JEAN-PAUL FOUCHÉCOURT
This young French tenor, already well booked in New York (in the Met's "Falstaff," and in BAM's upcoming Monteverdi cycle), presents a program of songs by such composers as Gounod, Fauré, and Poulenc, sponsored by the French Institute. He could have no better accompanist than Dalton Baldwin, who in dozens of recordings with Elly Ameling, Gérard Souzay, and many others has provided a model of Gallic style for decades. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. April 1 at 8.)

MUSIC BY JONATHAN KRAMER
Kramer has long enjoyed a professorial perch at Columbia, but his music goes light on the academic starch: it's as notable for its stylistic daring as for its chewy intellectual content. He receives a sixtieth-birthday tribute from the Moebius Ensemble, who play a selection of his works (including a première) at Miller Theatre. (Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 1 at 8.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY CHAMBER PLAYERS
The pianist Ruth Laredo joins the group for a program of Berwald, Prokofiev, and Mozart (the Quintet for Piano and Winds). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. 799-1259. April 2 at 2 and 8.)

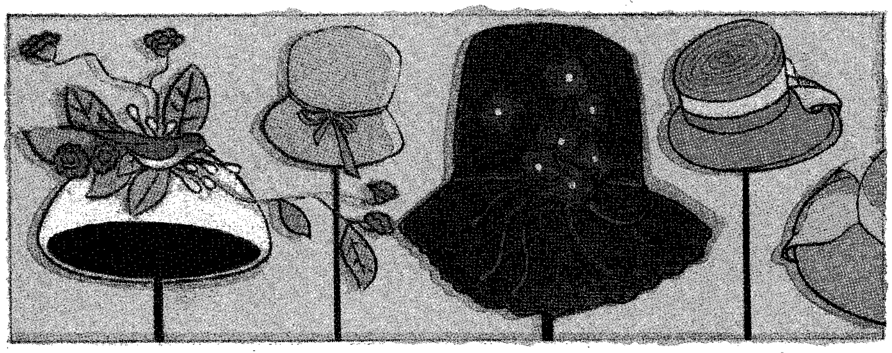
ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
March 27 at 7: The Greek poets Tassos Denegris, Antonis Fostieris, and Dinos Siotis read from their work, in their native language and in English. (The Foundation for Hellenic Culture, 7 W. 57th St. For reservations, which are required, call 308-6908.) ♦ April 2 at 6: Isaiah Sheffer, Vickie Karp, Rachel Hadas, Colette Inez, and George Bradley read from their contributions to "Where Books Fall Open: A Reader's Anthology of Wit and Passion," which was edited by the illustrator Bascove, who will also be present. (Donnell Library, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ April 2 at 7: Ian McEwan offers passages from his latest novel, "Atonement." (Old First Church, 729 Carroll St., at Seventh Ave., Park Slope. For more information, call 718-783-3075.) ♦ April 2 at 7: The novelist Peter Carey reads from his work. (Music Building, Queens College, Flushing. For more information, call 718-997-4646.)

TALKS
March 28 at 7: Tyler Anbinder, a professor of history at George Washington University, discusses his book "Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World's Most Notorious Slum" with Peter Quinn, the author of "Banished Children of Eve." (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, One Washington Mews. For more information, call 998-3950.) ♦ April 1 at 6:30: The illustrator and writer Maira Kalman presents a lecture on the art of children's book illustration titled "How to Conquer Stupidity." (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

Top Hats



"That Easter-bonnet thing is strictly amateur day, like New Year's Eve for nightlife people," said Linda Pagan, who describes her typical customer at **THE HAT SHOP** (120 Thompson St.; 219-1445) as "a style person, not a fashion person." On a recent Sunday afternoon at her downtown shop, Pagan was herself a living illustration of this type: she was clad in a pair of Second World War-era jodhpurs tucked into Wellingtons, a Vivienne Westwood sweater, and a tattersall hat with leather piping called a crusher and made by a designer named Princess Foufou. "Trim little hats! Baby blue! Seersucker!" Pagan said when asked what styles her customers are likely to want this season. "And I think toile is going to be big." She took off the Princess Foufou and modelled a squishy white-and-blue hat printed in an allover pattern featuring milkmaids ($88). Though Pagan sticks almost exclusively to New York milliners, she admitted that she will make an exception for an exceptional hat. "These travel hats actually come from Sydney. They're made of water hyacinths, and you revive them with water. The designer came into the shop with a stack of them, put them on a chair, and sat on them. I couldn't resist."

Though **KELLY CHRISTY** made most of the headgear for the Roundabout's recent revival of "The Women," a trifle in her Nolita storefront (235 Elizabeth St.; 965-0686) is too far out for even the wackiest revival of that play: it's a flat disk of shimmery fabric featuring four mallards sitting on it as if it were a deep-blue silk lagoon. "It's my Veronica Lake duck-pond hat," Christy says. "I made it for an exhibit sponsored by British Airways. There's a gallery space in the Concorde lounge."

Not everything in the shop is so flamboyant—a cheerful hat named the Go Fly ($100) has a crocheted straw crown and a panama brim and is decorated with straw butterflies from Italy, but "we can customize for color, and even change the butterflies if you want." Christy started making hats in 1987 and knew immediately she had a calling. "I love pottery, so when I first blocked a hat, it was such a joy."

Suzanne Newman fell into the business almost by accident. "Seventeen years ago I met an old lady who was a milliner. She was looking to retire, and I was looking for something to do. Gradually I took over from her, and then I opened on Madison." **SUZANNE COUTURE MILLINERY** (27 E. 61st St.; 593-3232) was on Madison Avenue for fifteen years, but a few weeks ago Newman packed up her trilbies and cloches and moved to the parlor floor of a brownstone around the corner. "It's a little more quaint—a little more intimidating, maybe, but we're going to keep the doors open to make it more welcoming." Picking up a gossamer number that looks like a sophisticated version of an exploded spiderweb, Newman is momentarily at a loss for words. Then she says, "It's a sunflower made out of net. Oh, I think actually I made it of horsehair. No, wait, it's straw." Far less intellectually challenging are the iridescent-blue cowboy hats with rhinestone trim, "for my Palm Beach ladies." According to Jill Courtemanche, Newman's assistant, spring is an especially busy time for the shop. "The Central Park Conservancy luncheon is in May, and people bring in their suits for us to match. It's great—when we go to the lunch we can look around and see what we've done."

—*Lynn Yaeger*

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from left to right, photos courtesy of L.K. Bennett, Holland & Holland, Browns, Royal Crown Derby

regal style

BY SIMON MILLS

This is the era of even-handed but wild-eyed tailors of Savile Row, Burberry-plaid bikinis, and reimagined British cuisine that stands with the best in Paris. Stroll London's streets: "urban aristo" peacocks are in full force; shopping is unrivaled; the hotels are crisply smart. And prepare to stay up late because London's nightlife moves with white-hot velocity.

Heading the pack is **Stork** (020 7734 3686) a branch of New York's long-gone Stork Club. Taken over late last year by restaurateur Marco Pierre White and club king Piers Adam, Stork has become a magnet for royals and movie stars—just as it once was in the nineteen-fifties when hedonists such as Frank Sinatra and Marlene Dietrich were regulars. Within stumbling distance is the **China White** club (020 7343 0040) just off Regent Street, still the most bacchanalian Wednesday night out anywhere in London. Then rest up at the less rowdy **Wellington Club** (020 7823 8211) in Knightsbridge, which is rife with movie stars and their concomitant entourages. Britain's most notorious disappearing act, "Lucky" Lord Lucan, was said to have enjoyed a last cocktail here before he vanished without a trace more than thirty years ago.

Although there have been reports of Lucan-sightings all over the world (gambling in Botswana, backpacking on Sicily's Mount Etna), should he return to London he'd be astonished by the food. **Uli** (020 7727 7511), the tiny but overpoweringly chic Chinese eatery on All Saints Road in Notting Hill is where a certain pop star takes his model dates (and his daughter who's about their age). **Inaho** (020 7221 8495) is a Japanese restaurant popular with local fashion designers (fittingly it's about the size of a boutique changing room). **George** (020 7491 4433), owned by Mark Birley of Annabel's, has become a favorite venue for Mayfair's indigenous art dealers and playboys. Of course dining classics The

Ivy, Nobu, Le Caprice, and J. Sheekey's continue to impress.

When it comes to fine dining, Britain is no longer so vigorously London-centric with Michelin-starred chefs now in residence all over the country, from **The Fat Duck** (01628 580 333) in Bray, Berkshire to **Le Manoir Aux Quat'Saisons** (01844 278 881) near Oxford. Still further afield is **Rick Stein's Seafood Restaurant** (01841 532 700) in Padstow, Cornwall. A smart Londoner's destination is **The Walnut Tree** (01873 852 797) near Abergavenny in Wales, which recently garnered a *Michelin Red Guide* star. Its expansive menu is a remarkable synthesis of traditional Italian with native Welsh. But The Walnut Tree has plenty of competition: this year's *Red Guide* has awarded its star to an unprecedented five restaurants in Wales.

Hotels like **Claridge's** (020 7629 8860), with its recently refurbished cigar bar Le Fumoir, will make you long for the days of kid gloves and morning coats. But dare to venture out of town for luxury's latest. **Babington House** (01373 812 266), near Bath, is a country house hotel given an urban twist. It's owned by Soho House, the Soho members-only club popular with actors, directors, and TV industry types. Weekends a similar crowd descends, with elegant cabals centered around a medieval-style fireplace big enough to burn heretics on.

The Llanwenarth House (01873 830 289) in South Wales is another country house hotel, but this one feels like you've been invited for a stay in a private manor. The décor is horse-and-hounds chic, and it's distinctly casual: Guests dine together at a communal table and there's only five guests rooms (none with locks). **The Carnegie Club at Skibo Castle** (01862 894 600) in the Scottish Highlands is the *ne plus ultra* in luxury. Set on the former estate of Andrew Carnegie, this seven-thousand-acre wonderland is the place to enjoy both splendor and the outdoors.

THE ROYAL TREATMENT

This year marks Elizabeth II's fiftieth year as Great Britain's Queen. The Golden Jubilee—the first such celebration since Victoria's in 1887—is billed not only as an important event in English history, but also as a time to reflect on what it means to be a Briton. Beginning May 1st, the commemoration is slated to include concerts, tours of private homes, and unprecedented public access to the Houses of Parliament, The Queen's Gallery in Buckingham Palace, and the Horse Guards building. For more information, or to find out more about travelling to Great Britain, visit:

goldenjubilee.gov.uk
travelbritain.org/ukok
travelwales.org
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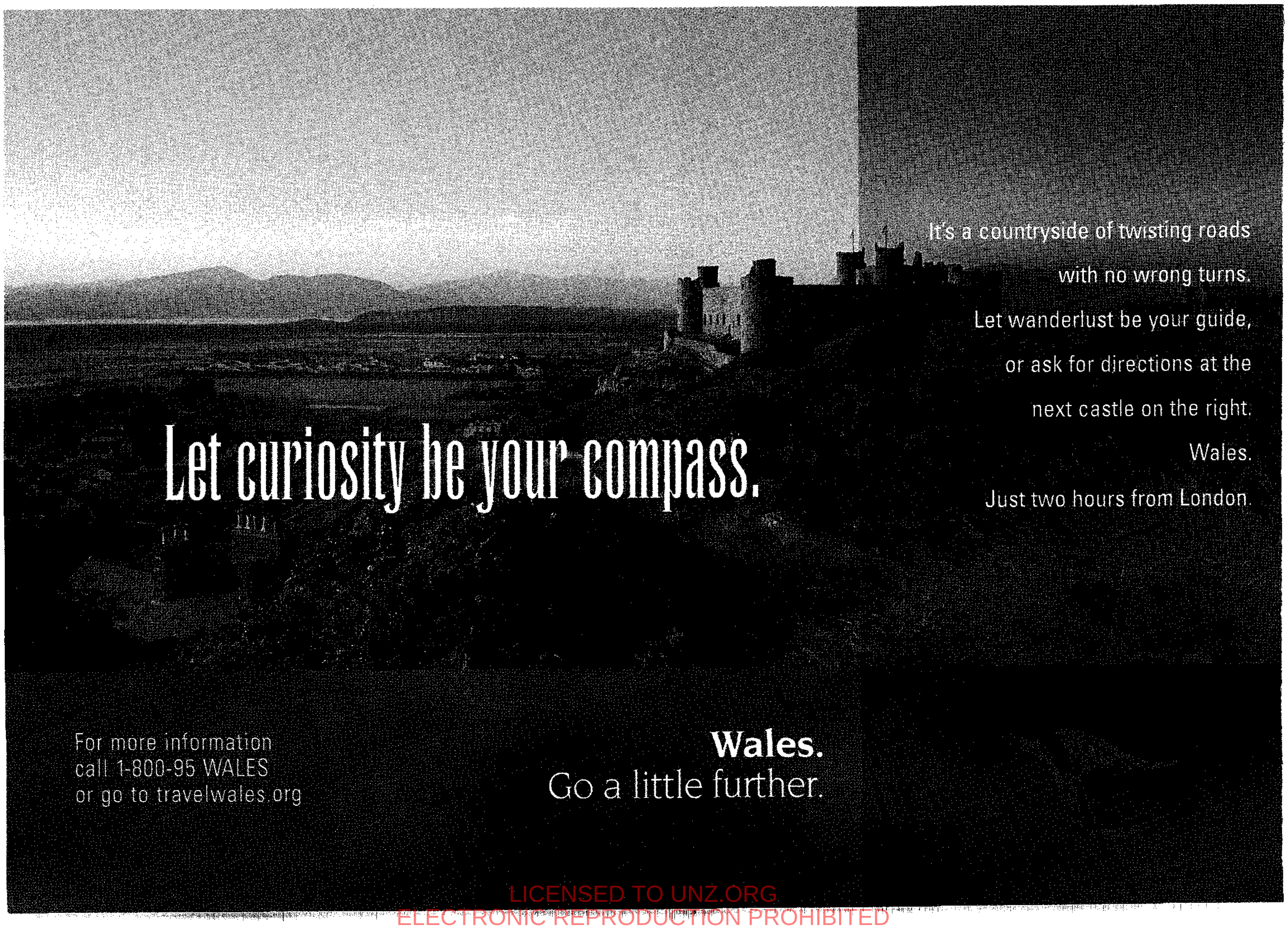
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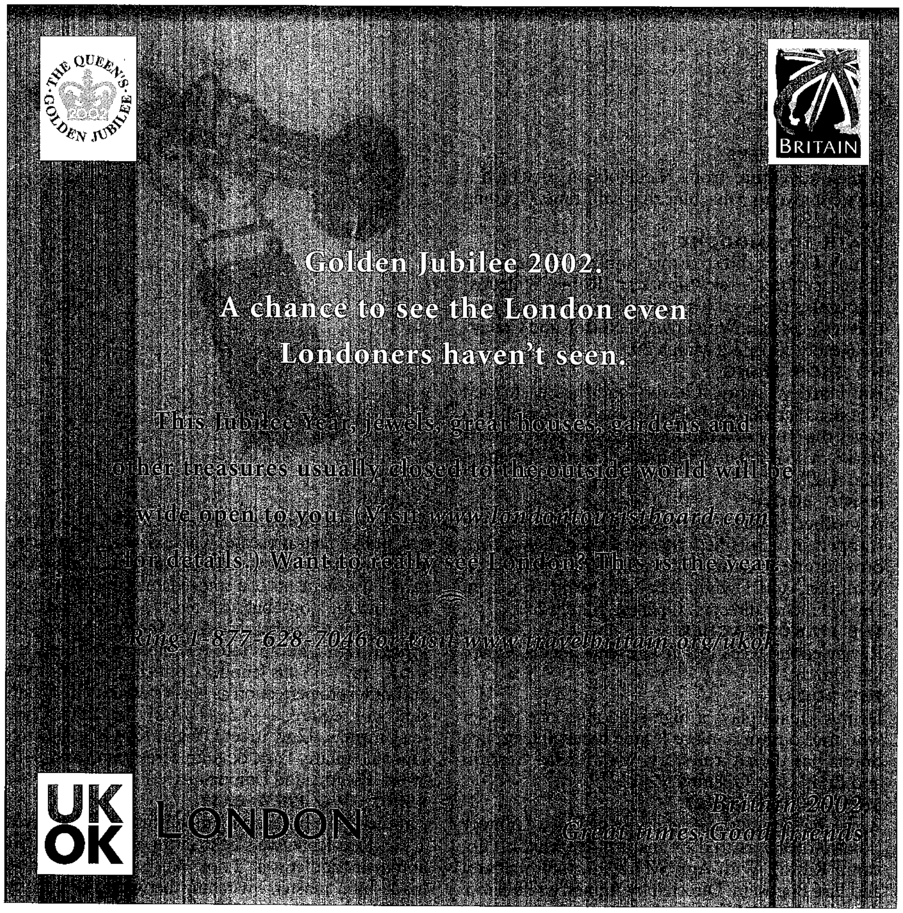
London's high streets have the best shopping in the world. Aristocratic stalwarts **Holland & Holland** (020 7499 4411), the Duke and Prince's hunting outfitter, and **Aquascutum** (0800 282922), suppliers of outerwear to the Elizabeth II and the Queen Mother, are also aglitter with swank and style.

Wander Conduit Street, a buzzing road running between Bond and Regent streets that enjoys Savile Row as a tributary. This hip little haven of stores harbors the likes of **Connolly Leather** (020 7439 2510) an automobile tannery that, with fashion guru Joseph Ettedgiu's help, has been reborn as a shop for fine leather goods and cashmere. Vivienne Westwood and Alexander McQueen are also nearby.

Take a detour onto Savile Row and see the changes that have transpired. Tradition and quality still rule, but in the shop windows of upstart **Duffer of St. George** (020 7734 3666) are the finest suits, some tailored in pink. At the Duke of Edinburgh's tailor, **Gieves and Hawkes** (020 7434 2001), there's a ready-to-wear collection cut with long lean lines and vibrant, purposely mismatched colors, such as aqua blue with dark brown and a hint of electric purple.

Those looking for royal frisson can find it throughout Great Britain during this year's celebration of the Queen's **Golden Jubilee**. Every city, town, and village will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of her accession to the throne.

Simon Mills writes regularly for British Vogue, *British* GQ, *and* The London Evening Standard.



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MOVIES OPENING

CLOCKSTOPPERS
A teen adventure from Nickelodeon in which a physicist invents a machine that halts time. Opening March 29.

DEATH TO SMOOCHY
Danny DeVito directed this comedy about a disgraced children's television star (Robin Williams) who stalks the lovable purple-rhinoceros character that replaces him. With Edward Norton and Catherine Keener. Opening March 29.

NO SUCH THING
Hal Hartley's satirical beauty-and-the-beast story. A journalist (Sarah Polley) travels to Iceland to cover the story of a foulmouthed monster (Robert Burke) who is fed up with modern society. Opening March 29.

PANIC ROOM
A mother (Jodie Foster) and her daughter are trapped in a fortified room of their New York brownstone, and three intruders (Jared Leto, Forest Whitaker, and Dwight Yoakam) want to get in. David Fincher directed. Opening March 29.

THE PIANO TEACHER
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening March 29.

THE ROOKIE
Dennis Quaid plays a high-school science teacher who tries out for a major-league baseball team in a drama based on a true story. With Rachel Griffiths and Brian Cox. Opening March 29.

SHOT IN THE HEART
A drama about the execution of Gary Gilmore (Elias Koteas) as told by his brother Mikal (Giovanni Ribisi). With Amy Madigan, Sam Shepard, and Eric Bogosian. Directed by Agnieszka Holland. Opening March 27. (Film Forum.)

TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC
Harry Shearer wrote and directed this mock documentary about an all-male Davos-like conference in Northern California. The ensemble cast includes Michael McKean, Fred Willard, and George Wendt. Opening March 29.

TIME OUT
A drama directed by Laurent Cantet ("Human Resources"), in which an executive (Aurélien Recoing) fabricates a new job when he loses his old one. In French. Opening March 29.

FILM NOTES

AMÉLIE
A waifish Parisienne discovers her mission in life: to bring unexpected happiness to others, and so to herself. Such is the story of Amélie (Audrey Tautou), and the simplicity of it—not to mention its dangerous surfeit of sweetness—appears to have touched a universal nerve. (In truth, the saga of the movie's success is more telling than anything in the movie itself.) Tautou is clearly a find, although one wonders what Mathieu Kassovitz, who plays the object of her affection, made of his role; it was Kassovitz who, in 1995, yanked French cinema up to date with his baring of ethnic hostilities in "La Haine." The Paris of this new movie lies at the other extreme, although what nags at you most is not the neighborly charm but the itchy, unsettled manner of the director, Jean-Pierre Jeunet. How far should we trust a plea for benevolence when it feels like a box of tricks? In French.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 11/5/01.) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and 34th Street Theatre.)

A BEAUTIFUL MIND
If you think the title stinks, try the movie. Russell Crowe plays John Nash, a real-life mathematician whose most radical work was produced in his early twenties and who shared the 1994 Nobel Prize for Economics at the age of sixty-six. In between lay years of darkness, during which Nash was assailed by paranoid schizophrenia. When it comes to the delicate matter of his delusions, this earnest movie, written by Akiva Goldsman and directed by Ron Howard, pulls a flagrant scam: whole characters and episodes are presented as urgently authentic, only to be revealed as figments of a cracked imagination. Crowe pulls out the stops, but he looks too bullish and controlled for such a pitiable victim. The movie grinds on forever until it bumps into redemption; the best reason to stay with it is Jennifer Connelly, who smolders and suffers to perfection as Nash's weary wife. Math skills not required.—*A.L.* (1/7/02) (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

BEING TWO ISN'T EASY
Capturing the burgeoning modernity of Tokyo circa 1962, Kon Ichikawa's light satire of novice parents and their toddler is a "Look Who's Talking" movie made by a master. Switching between the equally perplexed perspectives of a lively two-year-old boy (heard in voice-overs) and his mother and father, Ichikawa crafts a comedy about the mysteries of nature and nurture. The boy resembles his dad, and, naturally, his paternal grandmother dotes on him. Meanwhile, his mother attempts to raise him according to the no-nonsense dictates of contemporary childcare. Live-wire jolts of invention—for example, a sudden leap into animation when the boy sees a slivery "banana moon"—singe away any hint of treacle. The whole picture is rooted in solid observation: the tentative bonding of the mother and grandmother is like a sped-up slice of Ozu. In Japanese.—*Michael Sragow* (Museum of Modern Art; April 2.)

CLEO FROM 5 TO 7
One of the few films directed by a woman in which the viewer can sense a difference. The story is about the moods of a beautiful, chic popular singer (Corinne Marchand) during the two hours she waits to find out if she has cancer. Childish and fearful, she consults her horoscope and goes to a fortune-teller; she buys a hat; she rehearses a song; she cries. And throughout this 1962 picture the writer-director, Agnès Varda, sustains an unsentimental yet subjective tone that is almost unique in the history of movies. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (BAM Rose Cinemas; March 27.)

COMANCHE STATION
In this tight, unpretentious 1960 Western, the director Budd Boetticher shrewdly surrounds the righteous Randolph Scott with colorful good-bad and bad-good guys portrayed by avid novices and veterans hungry for a spot—even in the desert sun. They include Claude Akins, Skip Homeier, and the Kevin Bacon of early-sixties B movies, Richard Rust—all of whom are part of a crooked gang conniving to get the hero's reward for rescuing a mother from Indian captivity. Sam Peckinpah said he didn't care for Boetticher's Westerns, but "Comanche Station" in particular is a worthy predecessor to his own "Ride the High Country," which also starred Scott.—*M.S.* (Walter Reade Theatre; March 30.)

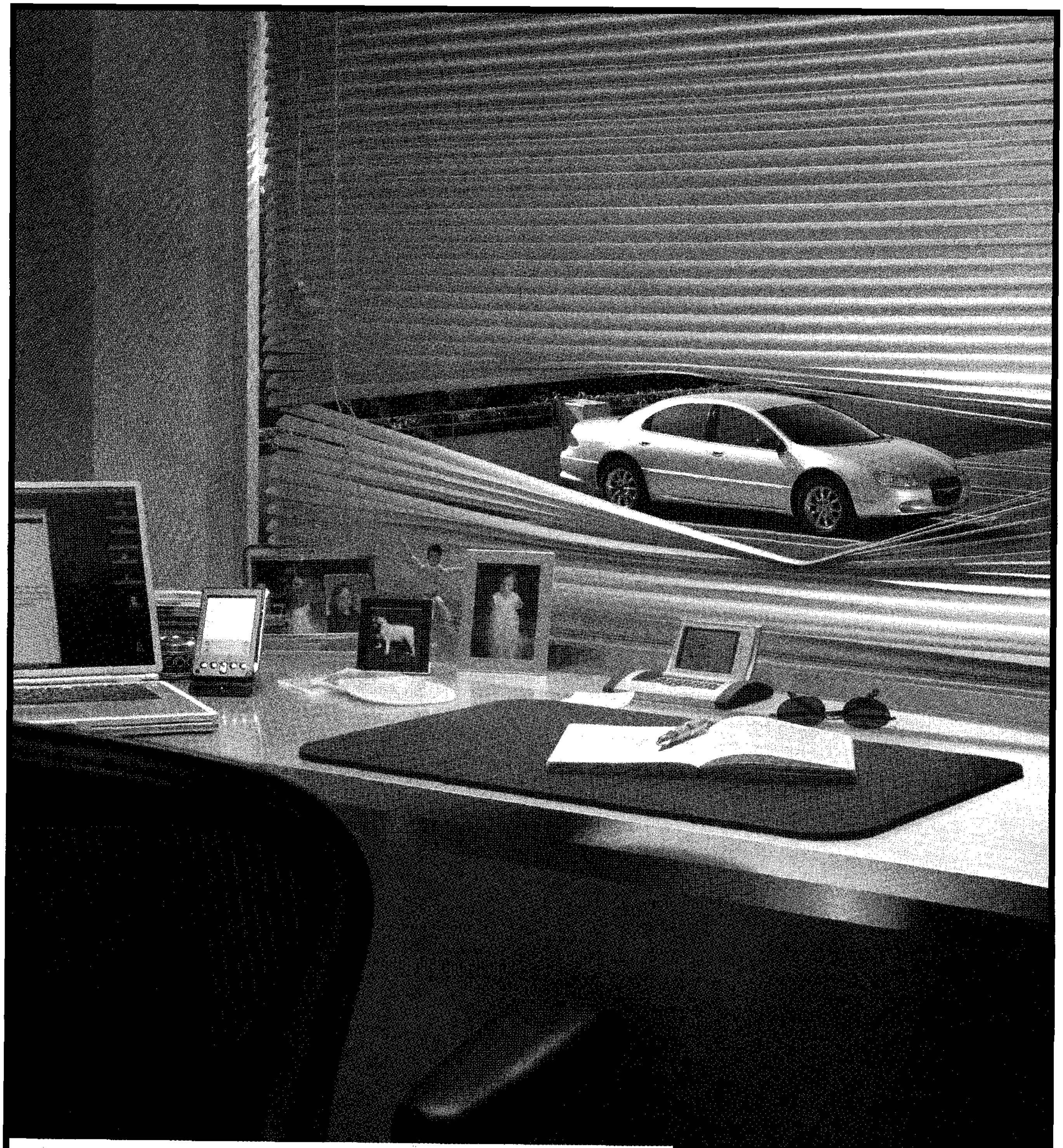
GOSFORD PARK
This Agatha Christie-style houseparty murder mystery, set in 1932, plants itself deep into social reality and achieves the kind of candor about class and sex that Christie would never have been capable of. The brilliant screenplay was written by Julian Fellowes. Robert Altman directs an enormous cast with lightness and speed and a masterly ability to pull the many little pieces of intrigue together into a coherent whole. Casually, the movie chronicles the end of the rigid British class system and the liberation of the working class through popular entertainment. The once-in-a-lifetime cast includes Michael Gambon, Kristin Scott Thomas, Maggie Smith, Jeremy Northam, and Charles Dance as the swells, and Helen Mirren, Eileen Atkins, Alan Bates, Clive Owen, and Emily Watson as the servants.—*David Denby* (1/14/02) (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

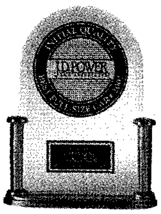
JIM BROWN: ALL AMERICAN
Spike Lee attempts to fashion the football legend Jim Brown into some sort of hero. He made this documentary for H.B.O., and the first half is a conventional rah-rah sports profile. Things pick up when Brown abruptly retires from professional football at age twenty-nine and embarks on his extended athletic afterlife. He's taken up by Hollywood and quickly becomes the black supermale, the anti-Poitier, steaming up the screen with Raquel Welch. When his acting career winds down, he finds the spotlight with self-created controversies, such as inviting gang members to a peace summit at his mansion or downplaying publicized problems with "the females." Sometimes Brown's ramblings and pronouncements are entertaining, in the limited way that conversations with opinionated monomaniacs can be, but much of the material (like the footage of his wife giving birth) seems bizarre and beside the point. Lee never really catches Brown's charisma; he just assumes the audience shares his awe.—*Michael Agger* (Film Forum.)

JOHN Q.
When his young son needs a heart transplant and his insurance won't cover the operation, a Chicago machinist (Denzel Washington) takes a prominent surgeon (James Woods) and a number of patients hostage, threatening to kill his captives if his son doesn't get a new ticker. This tearjerker, written by James Kearns and directed by Nick Cassavetes, is a trashy, opportunistic work that appears to have been intentionally pitched low in order to rouse an audience that the filmmakers view as politically somnolent. They may have calculated correctly: the movie is badly written, directed, and acted, yet the people in the theatre, fed up with the health-care system, seem alive to the picture and shout back at the screen.—*D.D.* (3/4/02) (84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

LAST ORDERS
A gang of three Englishmen, in various states of decline, gather to mourn a fourth, an East London butcher and veteran of the Second World War. Fred Schepisi's careful movie, adapted from Graham Swift's prize-winning novel, has a tricky, deck-shuffling structure, with past and present chopping repeatedly into one another; you may warm to this layering, though you could also argue that Schepisi is trying too hard to deepen a dangerously simple tale. The issue here is a friendship that survives the dwindling of a nation; we pass from an England proudly at war to the weary confines of a pub. The pals are played by David Hemmings, Tom Courtenay, Bob Hoskins, and, filling the dead man's shoes, Michael Caine. Some of their backchat has an oddly studied air—what would the film have felt like if Schepisi had allowed them to improvise? With Helen Mirren as the non-merry widow, and the unabashed Kelly Reilly as her younger self.—*A.L.* (2/18 & 25/02) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

MONSOON WEDDING
Mira Nair's new picture has been hailed as a feel-good spree, but it's better than that—a barely stable compound of the wounding, the confusing, and the appealing. The action takes place in Delhi, where a pair of middle-class parents (Lillete Dubey and Naseeruddin Shah) work themselves into a froth over the nuptials of their daughter (Vasundhara Das). Her marriage is, of course, arranged; for all the racket and buzz of the film's modernity, it finds time to make the suggestion—bewildering, perhaps, to audiences here—that from this archaic arrangement can spring an enduring love. The groom is flying in





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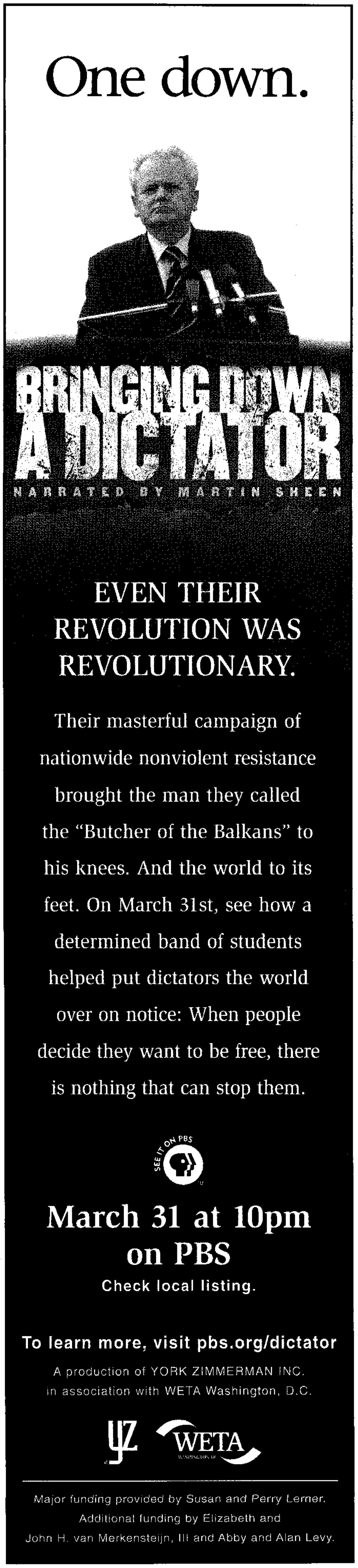
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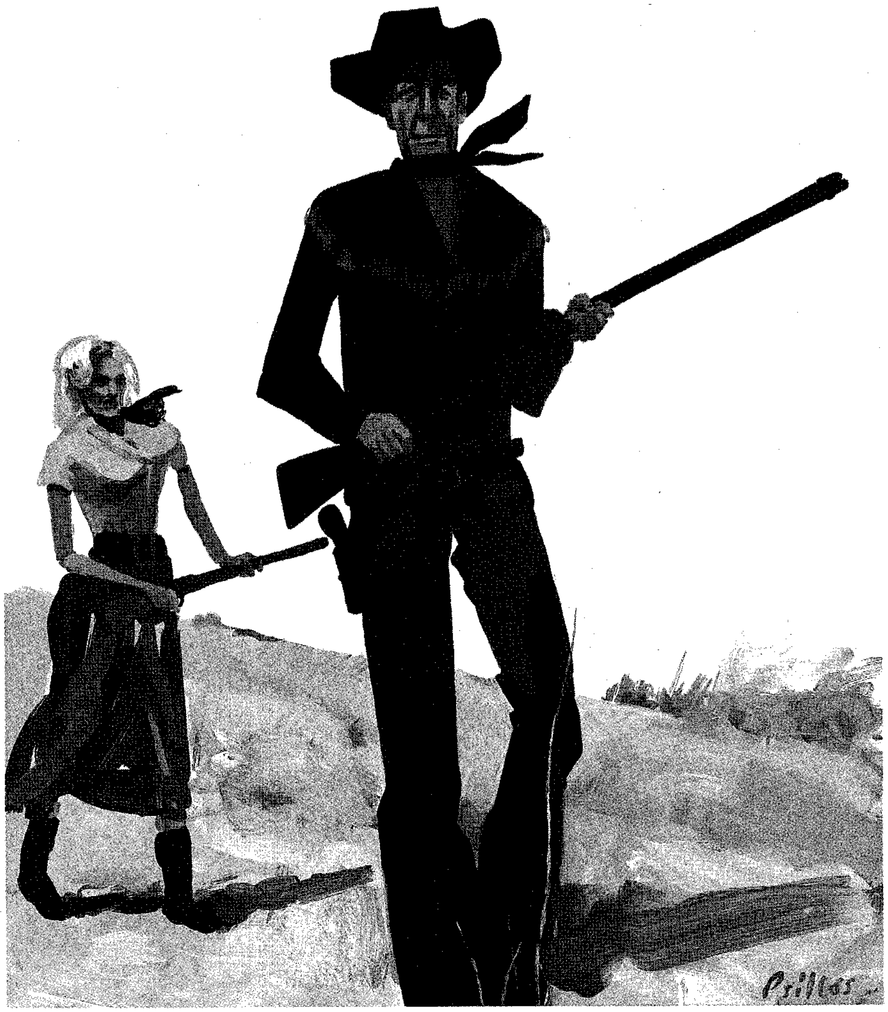
from Houston, Texas; another relative travels from Australia, and you brace yourself for the cultural collisions. The result is a comedy, but only just. India's stressful poise between orthodoxy and innovation (listen for the clash of peacock and cell phone) leads to a devastating family fracture that is only half-healed by the celebrations at the end. In English and Hindi.—*A.L.* (2/18 & 25/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Paris, Sunshine Cinema, and 34th Street Theatre.)



WESTERN MAN *Budd Boetticher directed elegant oaters with plots as square as his favorite leading man, Randolph Scott (above). Mid-career, he ruined himself making a movie about his passion, bullfighting. Dead broke in Mexico, he found a Cahiers du Cinéma article about his work and thought: "The French are crazy. What is there to write about?" The answer: exquisite moral tension, poetically blunt scripts, and clean, atmospheric cinematography. A six-film tribute begins at Walter Reade on March 29.*

THE PALM BEACH STORY

One of the giddiest and most chaotic of Preston Sturges's satiric orgies. The romantic problems of the leads (Joel McCrea and Claudette Colbert) get shoved aside by the secondary characters. Colbert, travelling by train, becomes involved with a bunch of drunken millionaires—members of the Ale and Quail Club, onboard with their hounds and guns—who stage an informal skeet shoot in the club car and demolish the glassware. Sturges's comic invention soars, but this 1942 picture is too wild to be sustained; still, it's a joy, despite the lulls of waggish humor. With Mary Astor, Rudy Vallee, and the Sturges stock company, including William Demarest, Franklin Pangborn, and Jimmy Conlin.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; March 29-31.)

SHOWTIME

Eddie Murphy, betraying his "Beverly Hills Cop" past, and Robert De Niro, continuing his comedic career swing, send up the buddy-cop movie. Although they click well in a few scenes, they're no Starsky and Hutch. After a botched drug bust, they get picked for a reality television show, and the script devotes a lot of time to the underwhelming observation that we act differently when we're on camera. Much of the humor is too self-referential—jokes with footnotes—and the whole production feels a bit half-hearted. The thugs are the movie's only real triumph: hirsute, club-hopping Eastern Europeans with guns that shoot bullets the size of soda cans.—*M.A.* (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE SON'S ROOM

The Italian director Nanni Moretti has delved into his darkest material to date and come up with his best film; even here, amazing to report, his customary lightness of touch has not deserted him. Moretti himself stars as a psychiatrist, Giovanni, who is married to the calm and adoring Paola (Laura Morante). They have two children (Jasmine Trinca and Giuseppe Sanfelice), one of whom dies, taking with him the dream of a happy family. Moretti's pacing is hard to fault, as he follows the hairline cracks that widen into gulfs and leave the household looking isolated and loveless. As a case study, the movie adds little to the archives of grief, and rightly so; Moretti is simply drawing up his own distinctively colored map of familiar terrain. In its sharp-etched way, this is no less comic than Moretti's other work, and, for all its sophistication, the comedy is of the primitive kind—that of continuing to live (to

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

jog, to cook, to go to school) when the reason to live has fallen from your hands. In Italian.—*A.L.* (2/4/02) (Village East Cinemas.)

STORYTELLING

Another disturbance of the peace from the writer-director Todd Solondz, who made "Welcome to the Dollhouse" and "Happiness." This time, we get a movie split in half, the first part of which concerns a creative-writing student (Selma Blair), thin and white, who dumps her disabled boyfriend and, for good measure, sleeps with her black professor. In the second half, we trace the exploits of a documentary filmmaker (Paul Giamatti) who wants to unearth what the youth of today are doing with themselves in high school. The answer is, more or less, nothing, although we do come across one slacker who would like to be on TV. In short, Solondz presents two tales meant to winkle out the cultural encounters that embarrass us the most, and then twists the knife and leaves us squirming harder than before. It's clever enough, and you could gash yourself on some of the lines, but, when a director is as resolutely ungenerous as Solondz, the end can only come as a relief.—*A.L.* (2/4/02) (Angelika Film Center.)

THE TIME MACHINE

In the future, we'll all be listening to Enya. The dyspeptic novel by H. G. Wells about a Victorian inventor who dabbles in time travel gets a New Age makeover courtesy of his great-grandson, the director Simon Wells. As Alexander Hartdegen, Guy Pearce does an admirable job of keeping a straight face, and his rides in the time machine are astonishing special-effects displays. One set piece—a triple-time morphing of nineteenth-century Manhattan into our skyscraper era—could be shown at the Hayden Planetarium. Even the improbable leaps of logic and the bland, international English dialogue don't really dampen the fun. It's when Pearce arrives in the future and discovers the Eloi (sort of like the Anasazi, except they're really into bamboo) that the race and class issues get an awkward, cringe-inducing treatment. Still, it's worth sticking around just to see Jeremy Irons as the Uber-Morlock.—*M.A.* (Chelsea West, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

WE WERE SOLDIERS

A bloody piece of hero worship devoted to an ideal commander—Lieutenant Colonel Harold Moore (Mel Gibson)—and to fighting and dying in the right way. The training is bruising, the leadership inspired, the wives as supportive as deeply rooted oaks. In 1965, early in the war in Vietnam, Moore leads units of the Army's Seventh Cavalry against a much larger North Vietnamese force. Mel Gibson is leathery but quick and alert, his eyes darting this way and that. When he runs around from one part of the perimeter to another, his M-16 blazing, the movie is exciting in a rudimentary, gung-ho way. The writer-director Randall Wallace stages much of the combat at very close range, with masses of North Vietnamese infantry hurling themselves against American riflemen. Recapitulating the many pictures made in the forties and fifties which portrayed the Americans as good and simple people fighting for a just cause, Wallace and Gibson have taken Vietnam out of history—essentially, they have assimilated it into the Second World War.—*D.D.* (3/11/02) (84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

YOJIMBO

Akira Kurosawa's boisterous, exuberant 1961 comedy-satire, with Toshiro Mifune as an unemployed samurai, a sword for hire. When our Westerner came into town, although his own past was often shady, he picked the right side—the farmers against the gamblers and the cattle thieves. This samurai walks into a town divided by two rival merchants quarrelling over a gambling concession, each supporting a gang of killers. He has his special skills and the remnants of a code of behavior, but to whom can he give his allegiance? He hires out to each and systematically eliminates both. We might expect violence carried to extremity to be sickening; Kurosawa, in a triumph of bravura technique, makes it explosively comic and exhilarating. In Japanese.—*P.K.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; April 1-2.)

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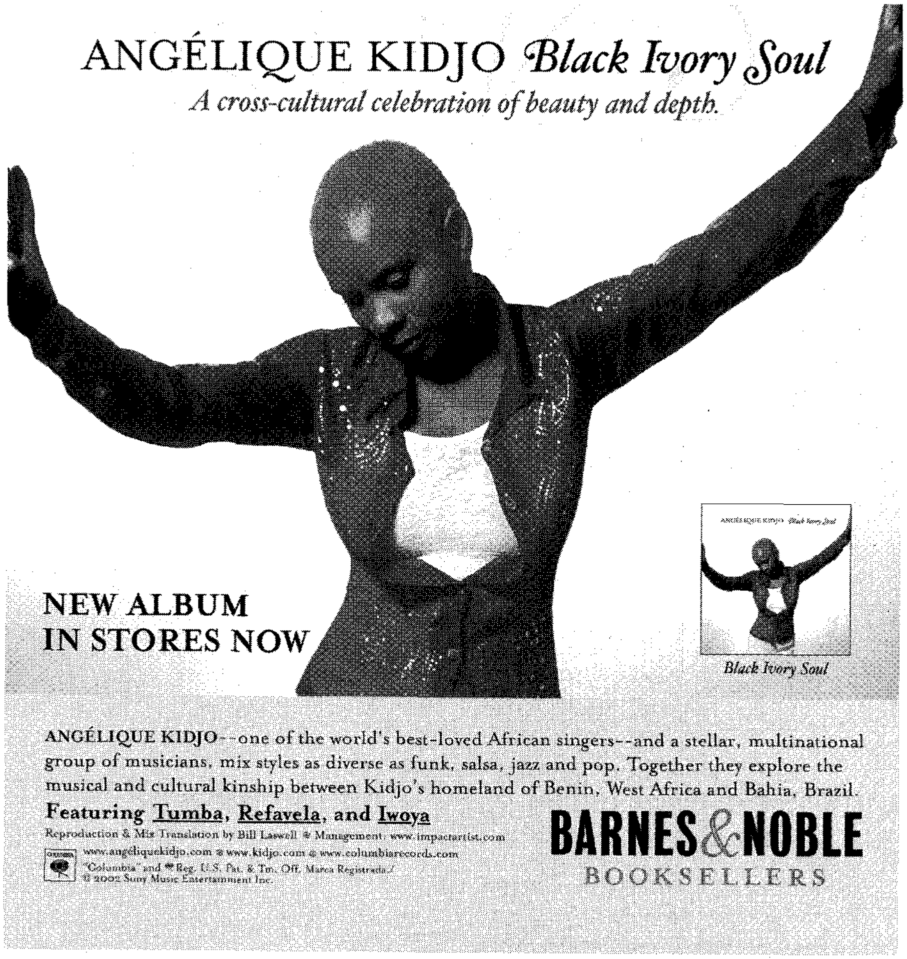

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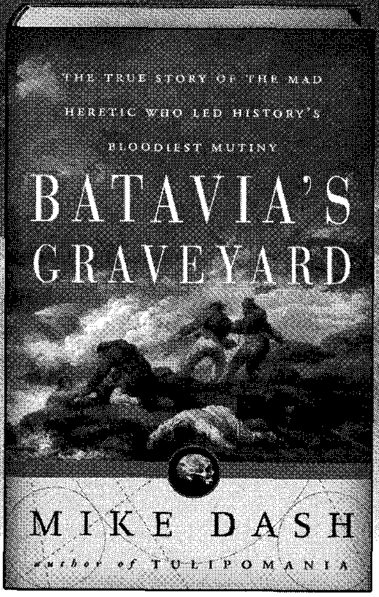
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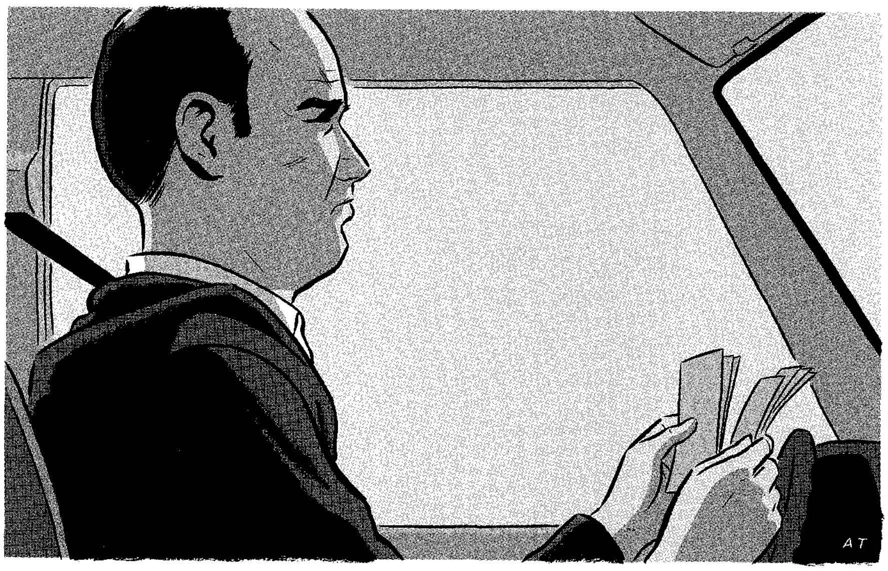
Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN
A new movie from the Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón, who came to Hollywood to make "A Little Princess" and "Great Expectations" and who has now returned in triumph to his homeland. The story is a stripped-down road movie: two teen-age friends, one rich (Diego Luna) and one poor (Gael García Bernal), borrow a car and set off to find the perfect beach, in the company of a Spanish woman (Maribel Verdú) who is not merely older, but married. Plus, she seems inexplicably happy to take either, or both, of them to bed. All the boys' dreams, in other words, have come true, and they can hardly handle it. What ensues is a sad and sexy picaresque, as everyone's illusions are peeled off along with their clothes. Cuarón's style is so open and relaxed, and his actors are so attuned to one another, that not until the final scene, with its litany of revelations, do we see that what felt life-affirming has also been a meditation on the slide of time, and on the offstage presence of death. Unrated, and therefore full of proper sex, with all the improprieties intact. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (3/18/02) (Lincoln Plaza, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)



Aurélien Recoing in Laurent Cantet's "Time Out," opening March 29.

ADRIAN TOMINE

ALSO PLAYING

E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL (3/25/02)
Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.
ICE AGE
Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia I and II, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.
IRIS
Cinema 2, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.
MONSTER'S BALL
BAM Rose Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, and Village East Cinemas.
STOLEN SUMMER
Cinema 1, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through March 31: "New York, New York," films selected by the New York Film Critics Circle. March 30 at 1:30: "Dog Day Afternoon" (1975,

Sidney Lumet). ♦ March 30 at 4: "Network" (1976, Lumet). ♦ March 31 at 1: "New York, New York" (1977, Martin Scorsese). ♦ March 31 at 4: "All That Jazz" (1979, Bob Fosse). ♦ Repertory night. March 30-31 at 6:30: "Band of Outsiders" (1964, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

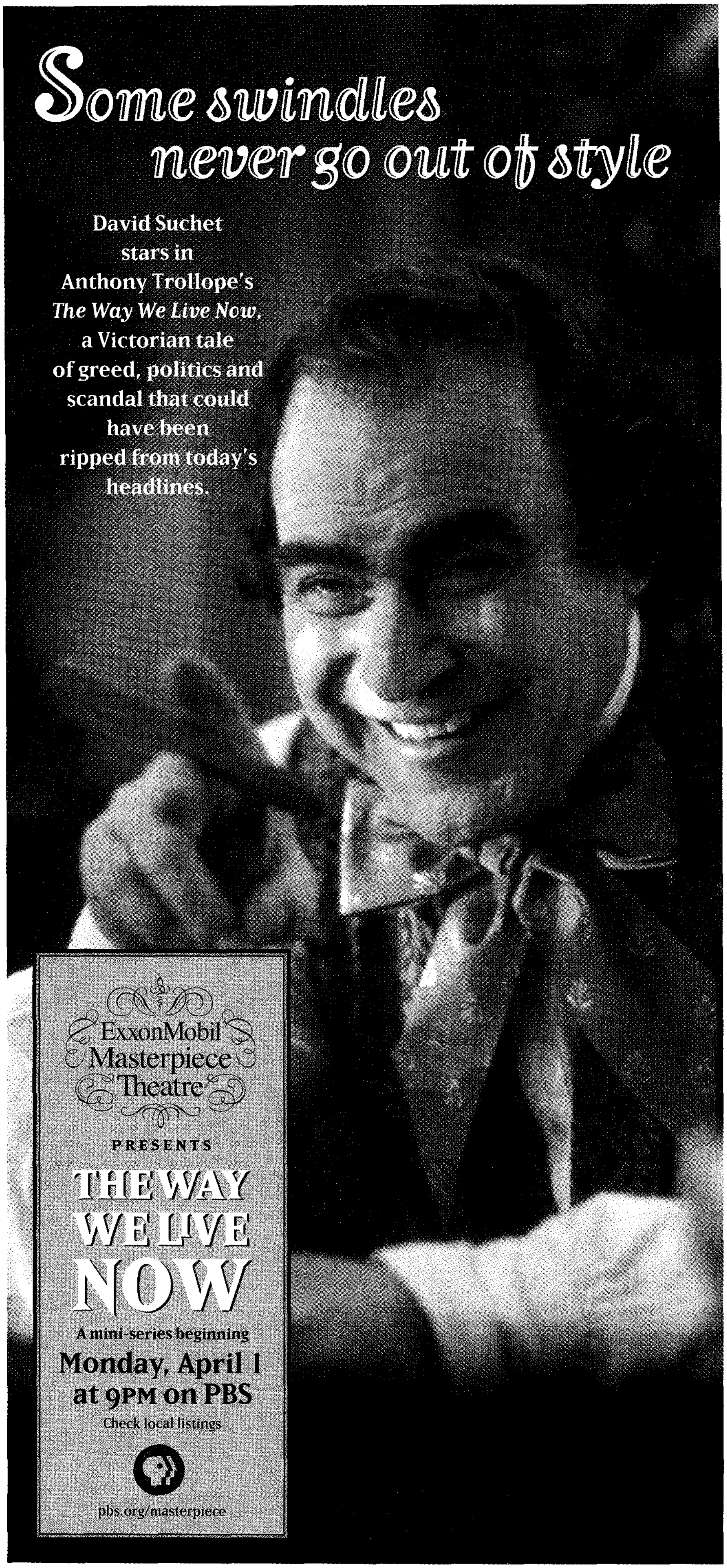
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Restored prints. March 28-31: "From Here to Eternity" (1953, Fred Zinnemann). ♦ March 28-31: "Walk on the Wild Side" (1962, Edward Dmytryk).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—The films of Jean-Luc Godard and Anna Karina. March 27 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Cleo from 5 to 7" (†). ♦ March 28-29 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "My Life to Live" (1962, Godard; in French). ♦ March 30-31 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Alphaville" (1965, Godard; in French). ♦ Repertory favorites. April 1-2 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Yojimbo" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—March 27-28 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:40, 7:30, and 9:30: "Sweet Smell of Success" (1957, Alexander Mackendrick). ♦ Starting March 29: "The Great American Comedy." March 29-31 at 1, 4:30, and 8:05: "Sullivan's Travels" (1941, Preston Sturges). ♦ March 29-31 at 2:45, 6:15, and 9:50: "The Palm Beach Story" (†). ♦ April 1-2 at 1, 4, 7:10, and 10:20: "Horse Feathers" (1932, Norman Z. McLeod). ♦ April 1-2 at 2:30, 5:35, and 8:45: "Monkey Business" (1931, McLeod).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Through April 7: "New Directors/New Films." March 27 at 6: "Tirana Year Zero" (2001, Fatmir Koçi; in Albanian). ♦ March 27 at 9: "A Dog's Day" (2001, Murali Nair; in Malayalam). ♦ March 28 at 6 and March 30 at 2:30: "God's Children" (2001, Hiroshi Shinomiya; in Tagalog). ♦ March 28 at 9 and March 31 at 6: "Truly Human" (2001, Ake Sandgren; in Danish). ♦ March 29 at 6 and March 30 at noon: "My Wife Is an Actress" (2001, Yvan Attal; in French). ♦ March 29 at 9 and March 31 at 8:30: "The Slaughter Rule" (2002, Alex and Andrew Smith). ♦ March 30 at 5:30 and March 31 at 3:30: "Delbaran" (2001, Abolfazl Jalili; in Farsi). ♦ March 30 at 8 and March 31 at 11:30 A.M.: "The Fast Runner" (2001, Zacharias Kunuk; in Inuktitut). ♦ April 1 at 6 and April 2 at 9: "The Inner Tour" (2001, Ra'anan Alexandrowicz). ♦ April 1 at 9 and April 2 at 6: "Dog Days" (2001, Ulrich Seidl; in German). ♦ Through April 5: "Kon Ichikawa: A Reprise." All films are in Japanese. March 28 at 1:30: "The Men of Tohoku" (1957). ♦ March 28 at 2:45: "Tokyo Olympiad" (1965). ♦ March 29 at 1:30: "The Heart" (1955). ♦ March 29 at 3:45: "Hakai" (1962). ♦ April 1 at 2: "Money Talks" (1964). ♦ April 1 at 4: "A Woman's Testament" (1960). ♦ April 2 at 2:30: "Being Two Isn't Easy" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through March 28: "Cinema Without Borders: The Films of Joris Ivens." March 27 at 3:10 and March 28 at 9: "The Seine Meets Paris" (1957; in French), ". . . A Valparaíso" (1963; in French), and "Pour le Mistral" (1965; in French). ♦ March 27 at 5:10: "The Spanish Earth" (1937) and "The 400 Million" (1939). ♦ March 27 at 7:15 and March 28 at 5: "A Tale of the Wind" (1988; in French). ♦ March 28 at 1: "Komsomol; or, Song of Heroes" (1932; in Russian) and "Power and the Land" (1941). ♦ March 28 at 2:45: "Indonesia Calling" (1946) and "Song of the Rivers" (1954; in German). ♦ March 28 at 6:45: "The 17th Parallel" (1968; in French). ♦ Starting March 29: A six-film tribute to the director Budd Boetticher. March 29 at 2 and 5:30 and March 31 at 8:45: "Ride Lonesome" (1959). ♦ March 29 at 3:45 and 9 and April 2 at 8:15: "The Tall T" (1957). ♦ March 29 at 7:15 and April 2 at 6:30: "Seven Men from Now" (1956). ♦ March 30 at 7 and April 2 at 4:30: "Decision at Sundown" (1957). ♦ March 30 at 8:45: "Comanche Station" (†). ♦ March 31 at 7 and April 2 at 2:30: "Buchanan Rides Alone" (1958).



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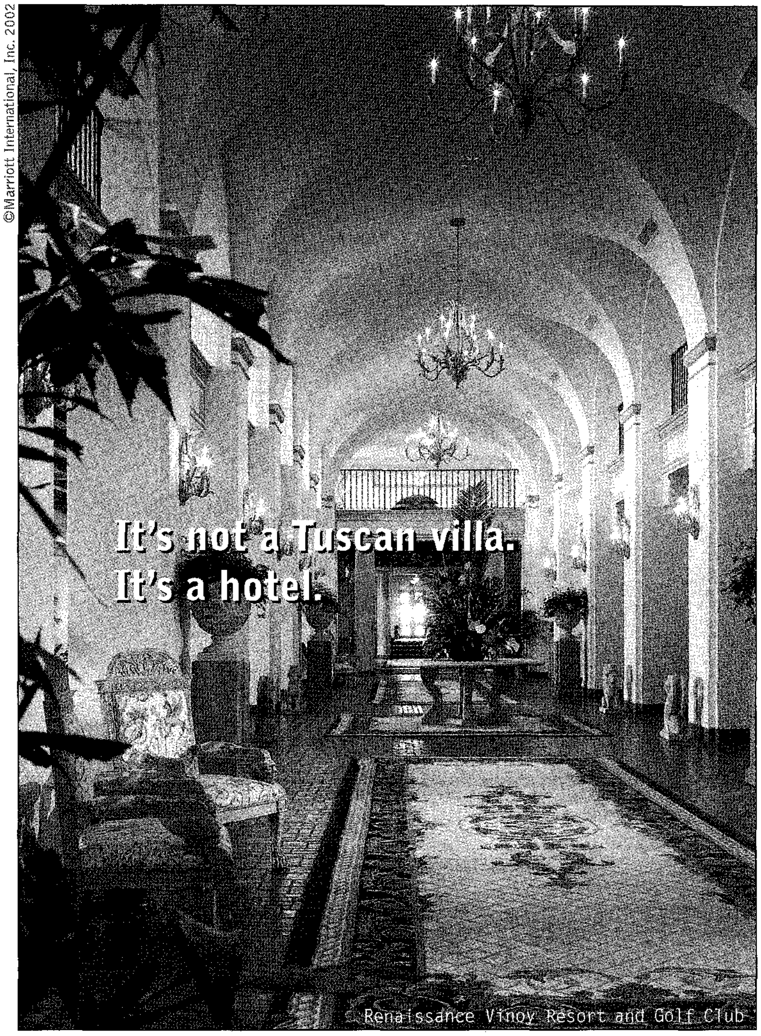

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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
SINS

When a man (always a man) becomes a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, he takes vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. All three—and their opposites, and their corruptions—have been sometimes ironic themes of the internal crisis that currently afflicts the American branch of the Church and seems to be the leading edge of a crisis within the entire worldwide institution. The priestly vows correspond, roughly, to the id, the ego, and the superego, into which a less venerable orthodoxy divided the human psyche; and these three, too, have been playing their roles, in mostly unbalanced and distorting ways. The precipitating factor is a cascading series of disclosures detailing the sexual exploitation of children and, more commonly, adolescent boys by a large number (though a small minority) of priests, in many dioceses throughout the country. The wave began in January, in Boston, where a dogged investigation by the *Globe* established that a priest named John J. Geoghan had been shuttled from parish to unsuspecting parish for thirty years, even though his superiors, including Bernard Cardinal Law, the Archbishop of Boston, knew with increasing certainty that he was a serial and, finally, incorrigible sexual molester. It quickly emerged that some eighty priests had been similarly (and credibly) accused, and similarly protected, in Boston alone. There have been secondary explosions from coast to coast; in all, some two thousand priests have been accused. And, while the United States is the epicenter, scandals of the same type have erupted abroad; in Ireland, in January, the Church agreed to pay a hundred and ten million dollars to compensate some three thousand victims of child abuse. One might say that Boston was merely the tip of the iceberg, except that what is happening feels more like last week's sudden, unsettling melting of a country-sized part of the Antarctic ice shelf.

The big shocker, for Catholics and non-Catholics alike, has been not so much the abuse itself—awful and heartbreaking though it is—as the coldly bureaucratic "handling" of it by hierarchs like Law and the current Archbishop of New York, Edward Cardinal Egan, who faced yet another such scandal for several years when he was Bishop of Bridgeport, Connecticut. The anger of Catholic commentators has been astonishing. One of many who have weighed in wrote, "The resignation-in-disgrace of Cardinal Law would be meaningful only in the context of an equivalent resignation by Pope John Paul II, of whose antireform policies—closed, secretive, dishonest, totalitarian—Cardinal Law is a mere functionary." And another: "The crisis in the Catholic Church lies not with the fraction of priests who molest youngsters but in an ecclesiastical power structure that harbors pedophiles, conceals other sexual behavior patterns among its clerics, and uses strategies of duplicity and counterattack against the victims." That first snippet is from a recent article by James Carroll, a distinguished author and a former priest. The second is from "Lead Us Not Into Temptation" (1992), by Jason Berry, a journalist who, in 1985, in articles for the *Times of Acadiana*, a small Cajun-country weekly, broke the first of several seemingly isolated stories of abusive priests that foreshadowed the present mess. After another such case, in Massachusetts in 1993, Cardinal Law went after the press. "By all means," he thundered, "we call down God's power on the media, particularly the *Globe*." This time, though, there has been little or no attempt to attribute the revelations to anti-Catholic sensationalism. Through the efforts of newspapers like the *Globe* and the Hartford *Courant*, reams of formerly confidential documents, including transcripts of depositions given by Church officials, have been made public. They speak for themselves, and what they say appalls.

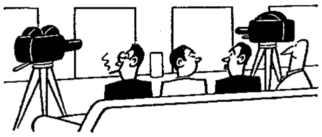
The *Pilot*, the official newspaper of the Boston Archdiocese (Bernard Law, publisher), noted in an editorial two weeks ago that "these scandals have raised serious questions in the minds of the laity that simply will not disappear," including the question of whether celibacy should "continue to be a normative condition for the diocesan priesthood." (The editorial ended with a promise that the following week's installment would concern "questions that circulate around the issue of ordaining women," but, when the next issue came out, readers found instead a lengthy denial that the previous editorial had been intended "to call for changes in Church policies.") Yet it is only common sense to see a connection between the scandals and the requirement of priestly celibacy—and, for that matter, between the scandals and the exclusion of women not only from the priesthood but from all positions of official power within the Church.

One needn't be a Catholic to have some inkling of the spiritual impulse behind celibacy, which, like poverty, is presumably meant to signify a priest's radical dependence on the divine. But it must be said that the vows are unevenly stressed: though the priesthood pays badly, priests who earn or inherit extra money can do what they like with it. (One of the accused had his own summer cottage, to which he took the boys he exploited.) Divorced from its spiritual purpose and turned into a job requirement, celibacy becomes either a sham or a suppression of one's humanity, or both. Like the Church's rejection of contraception, and its insistence (sometimes nominal, sometimes not) on the sinfulness of any form of sexual expression that is not both marital and procreative, mandatory priestly celibacy is increasingly driving a wedge between the hierarchy and the laity, with priests themselves caught in the middle. And even among Catholics who embrace those teachings, there is widespread disgust with the authoritarian high-handedness of the hierarchy.

Within the Church, celibacy is a matter not of religious dogma but of ecclesiastical law. It can be changed. The Church is not a democracy, and a humane resolution will presumably await the advent of a Pope who seeks one. No one expects, or wants, the vestries of Catholic churches to be populated by swingers. But the day will surely come when a Catholic priesthood that includes men and women, married and single, in which ascetic celibacy and human intimacy are parallel spiritual paths, will appear in retrospect to have been as inevitable as majority rule in South Africa and the withering away of Soviet Communism seem now.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

OSCAR NIGHT
A MOVIE FOR EVERYONE



A nifty feature of the Oscars ceremony this year was a short film showing about a hundred people, some famous and some not, talking about movies. The segment was directed by the filmmaker Errol Morris, whose grim comic take on the world, in documentaries such as "Mr. Death" and "Fast, Cheap and Out of Control," might seem incompatible with the earnest, happy pomp of the Academy Awards.

One thing about Errol Morris, though, is that he likes to make television commercials. Not long after September 11th, he shot an ad for United Airlines, in which United employees, in uniform, share unscripted inspirational thoughts about the airline. According to Morris, Laura Ziskin, the producer of this year's Oscars, saw the United spot and said, "I want that guy." She called him in late December and asked whether he'd like to make a short movie about the movies, which would replace the dance number that usually kicks off the show.

Over five days of shooting (one in Boston, one in San Francisco, two in New York, and one at the White House), Morris interviewed dozens of people, civilians and celebrities, among them Christy Turlington, Wavy Gravy, Lani Guinier, Jello Biafra, Al Sharpton, Laura Bush, and a guy who happened to be wandering the set with a tray of fresh fruit. (Morris tried but failed to land interviews with the Queen Mother, Fidel Castro, and Anna Nicole Smith.) By last week, he had more than twenty-four hours of movie talk—some pretentious, some lame, some delightful, some strange—and he whittled it down to an Oscar-friendly four minutes and fifteen seconds. "I really want to do something more with this thing, as a movie," he said last week. "I'm absolutely convinced it's going to have a life after the Oscars. I'd like it to be a long-form film."

Morris's interviewing technique is unorthodox. He sits out of sight of the subject, in a curtained booth with a camera and a monitor, while the subject stands ten yards away, facing a customized device that Morris calls an "interrotron." Basically, the interrotron is a camera with a special screen that displays the live, disembodied image of Morris as he shouts out questions, makes funny faces, and orders his subjects to repeat things.

Two weeks before the Oscars, Morris was in his booth, in a studio on West Fifteenth Street. The interviews were stacked up, one per half hour, and by mid-morning the schedule was a shambles. On camera, Walter Cronkite was telling Morris about "The Best Years of Our Lives." (Morris: "Say it again?" Cronkite: "The Best Years of Our *Lives*." "Again!" "The *Best* Years of Our Lives." "And again, please!") Donald Trump was waiting, with mounting impatience, in the wings. Mikhail Gorbachev and entourage were trudging up the stairs. And Iggy Pop was in the greenroom.

When Cronkite was finished, Morris thanked him, via interrotron, and emerged, sweating, from his booth. He was dressed in a blue button-down, khakis, and blue sailing shoes. "I'd like to try to sneak you in before Gorbachev," he said to Trump. "This is insane, by the way."

Then Gorbachev strode into the studio, with two bodyguards and his regular translator, Pavel Palazhchenko. Gorbachev and Trump shook hands, and Gorbachev said something to Trump in Russian. "You're not changing," Palazhchenko translated.

"*You're* not changing," Trump replied, almost embracing Gorbachev, before waving him forward: "You go first, Mikhail." Soon Gorbachev was aligned before the interrotron, with his translator standing behind him like a puppeteer.

Morris looked furtively around. "For a connoisseur of the absurd, this is hard to beat," he said, and then slipped into his booth and addressed the two Russians on his screen: "So, movies!"

Gorbachev, via Palazhchenko, said that film was his favorite art form, that he loved "Gone with the Wind" ("What I call the people's drama—very impressive") and anything with Julia Roberts. Russell Crowe, too. "You have many amazing actors in this country—Jack Nicholson, Dustin Hoffman. . . ."

"Do you have a favorite Ronald Reagan movie?" Morris asked.

"I like Ronald Reagan as a political leader, but on the other hand I was not particularly impressed by his movie roles. His best role was as President."

During a brief break, Morris stepped out of his booth for a drink of water, and Cronkite walked slowly past, on his way out of the studio. "You should ask him about 'Doctor Zhivago,'" Cronkite said.

"I should ask him about 'Dr. Strangelove'!"

Back into the booth. Silence on the set. "What will be your final question, sir?" Palazhchenko said to the interrotron. They were late, he explained, for a meeting with Dr. Kissinger. After some talk about violence in films, Morris leaned toward his monitor and asked about "Dr. Strangelove."

"I believe that the warning films are important and justified," Gorbachev said, through Palazhchenko, and began expounding on the continuing risk of nuclear annihilation. "I held that famous nuclear briefcase, and I know what it would mean to press that button. Even when I was involved in a training exercise, I never pushed that button."

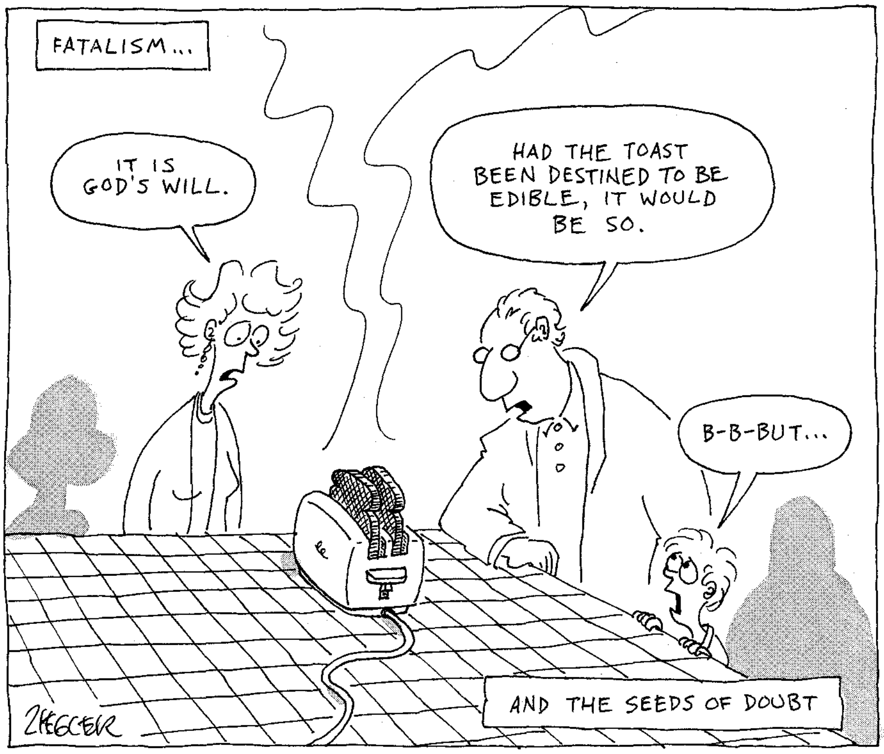
"Have you *seen* 'Dr. Strangelove'?" Morris asked.

"*Nyet*," Gorbachev said.

"No, he has not," Palazhchenko said.

Soon it was time for Trump, who had come prepared to talk about "Citizen Kane."

—*Nick Paumgarten*

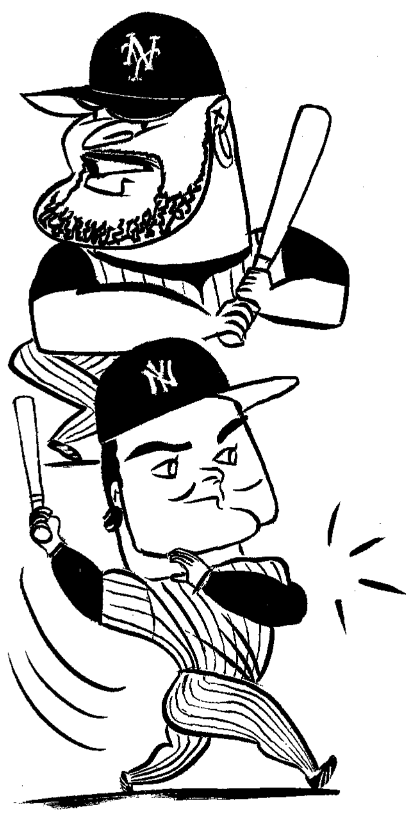

FATALISM...
IT IS GOD'S WILL.
HAD THE TOAST BEEN DESTINED TO BE EDIBLE, IT WOULD BE SO.
B-B-BUT...
AND THE SEEDS OF DOUBT
ZIEGLER

WHO'S ON FIRST DEPT.
JASON AND MO

Spring training wraps up this week, and local fans back from Florida are buzzing about the two new mega first basemen who'll be playing across town from each other (and, inevitably, *against* each other), once the bell rings. Jason Giambi comes to the Yankees from Oakland, where he was the centerpiece of the vivid young Athletics club that scared the pants off the Yanks in the past two postseasons, while Mo Vaughn arrives at Shea Stadium via the Anaheim Angels—actually, he sat out last season after surgery to repair a damaged tendon and a biceps muscle in his left arm—and, before that, a storied tenure with the Red Sox, where his American League Most Valuable Player Award, in 1995, almost felt secondary to his eloquent presence in the soulless Fenway Park clubhouse and in Boston's racially troubled neighborhoods. These first sackers catch your eye—Mo goes six feet one and two hundred and seventy pounds, and Giambi six-three and two-thirty-five—and while both bat left and can knock the ball out of the premises they also relish the useful wrong-field double. Mo is thirty-four and Jason thirty-one, and they will bring vast comfort to their neighbor batters in two of the most expensive lineups since El Alamein. Maybe the comparisons should stop there, although Giambi had an M.V.P. of his own in 2000, and was done out of another one last year, in the balloters' rush to acknowledge the special skills of Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki.

Here are two known Great Guys but not much alike—that's the fun of it. This could be like Mantle vs. Mays in the nineteen-fifties barrooms. Jason is white and boyishly mouthy and, until recently, was haired like Jerry Garcia; Mo is black and a god. Mo has the better glove; Jason's becoming the best hitter-slugger of his generation. He batted .342 last year, with thirty-eight homers, and also led his league in on-base percentage for the second year running. A writer who covered Jason out West told me, "This guy is gonna be another Joe Namath in New York. Watch and see." Style points will be awarded. Giambi, shorn of his biker's beard and thick locks—sometimes he drove to work on one of his three Harleys—by the rules of the Order of St. George, arrived in the Tampa clubhouse as a clean-cut, smiling collegian, and reminded everybody that the digits of his new uniform number, 25, added up to the 7 worn by his hero, Mickey Mantle. This was taken with only a few exchanged glances among the beat writers, since he'd said the same thing in Oakland, about his number there, which was 16.

Wherever Giambi went at Legends Field, the writers followed, and when he stopped and talked the scene resembled a middle-school sex-ed manual, with that diagram of eager spermatozoa encircling the compliant egg. "I don't mind," he said equably. "I like to talk." Asked about his old team, he said, "We were a band of brothers." Asked about his new one, he said, "I'm having a great time. We're meant to get into the World Series—that's why



Mo Vaughn and Jason Giambi

I'm here." The haircut? "I'm getting there. My lip and chin hadn't seen the sun for about nine years."

The Yankees haven't had a prime talker since David Cone departed, and often when Giambi sat down in the clubhouse with a few teammates you saw guys leaning back and laughing, with their hands clasped behind their heads, and others down the line leaning forward from their chairs to catch the fun. This writer, regarding a fanged and dripping skull and surrounding hellish scenery entirely covering Giambi's left shoulder, an inch or two away in the clubhouse interview scrum, asked if he still enjoyed his tattoos, and got back "Sure I do. But my counselling sessions are still going on."

Mo Vaughn talking is more pull-up-a-chair. He faces his questioner at close quarters, his eyes holding yours, and lights up the gravitas with passing smiles of extraordinary sweetness. Playing in Shea will be a homecoming for him. He remembers going to his very first big-league game there, as a child—Tug McGraw and Cleon Jones—and being taken home after seven innings. A local kid, he grew up in Norwalk, Connecticut—his parents were schoolteachers—graduated from Trinity-Pawling School, in Dutchess County, and put in three years at Seton Hall. "We were an all-sports, Channel 11 WPIX family," he said. "I was big—a hundred and fifty pounds at the age of twelve—and I played hard. Now everybody's working out, and everybody's big."

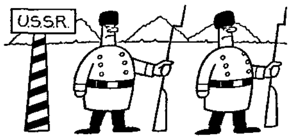
The Mets loaded up over the winter, adding the remarkable second baseman Roberto Alomar as well as Vaughn and some pitching to their talented mix, and Mo takes the approaching season as an honor and a weight. "Opportunities like this do not happen a lot," he said. "I'm telling people this is a premium situation, and we have to make every use of the thing we have here and now."

Mo's parents have been on hand for almost all of his home games down the years, even though they had to book twelve coast-to-coast round-trip flights each season to keep up while he played for the Angels. Now the Vaughns are moving to Queens, and he has bought them a luxury box at Shea for the summer. "They're right there with me, and my two little sisters who live in Connecticut can be there, too," he said. "It was tough being in California, but it's definitely nice now."

—*Roger Angell*

MOSCOW POSTCARD

A CHURCH FOR LUBYANKA



For decades, a statue of "Iron" Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the first chief of Lenin's secret police, glowered over the Moscow traffic swarming past Lubyanka, the squat, yellow headquarters of the K.G.B. Then, on an August night in 1991, steel cables were wrapped around Dzerzhinsky's neck, and he was lifted up by a crane and suspended in the air; that tableau, that triumphant gallows, was the enduring image of the last hours of the Soviet empire. Ever since, Lubyanka Square has been changing; the shabby old Soviet food store behind the K.G.B.'s main building has become a posh supermarket, part of a chain called the Seventh Continent—a sinister, though unconscious, reminder of the Gulag Archipelago.

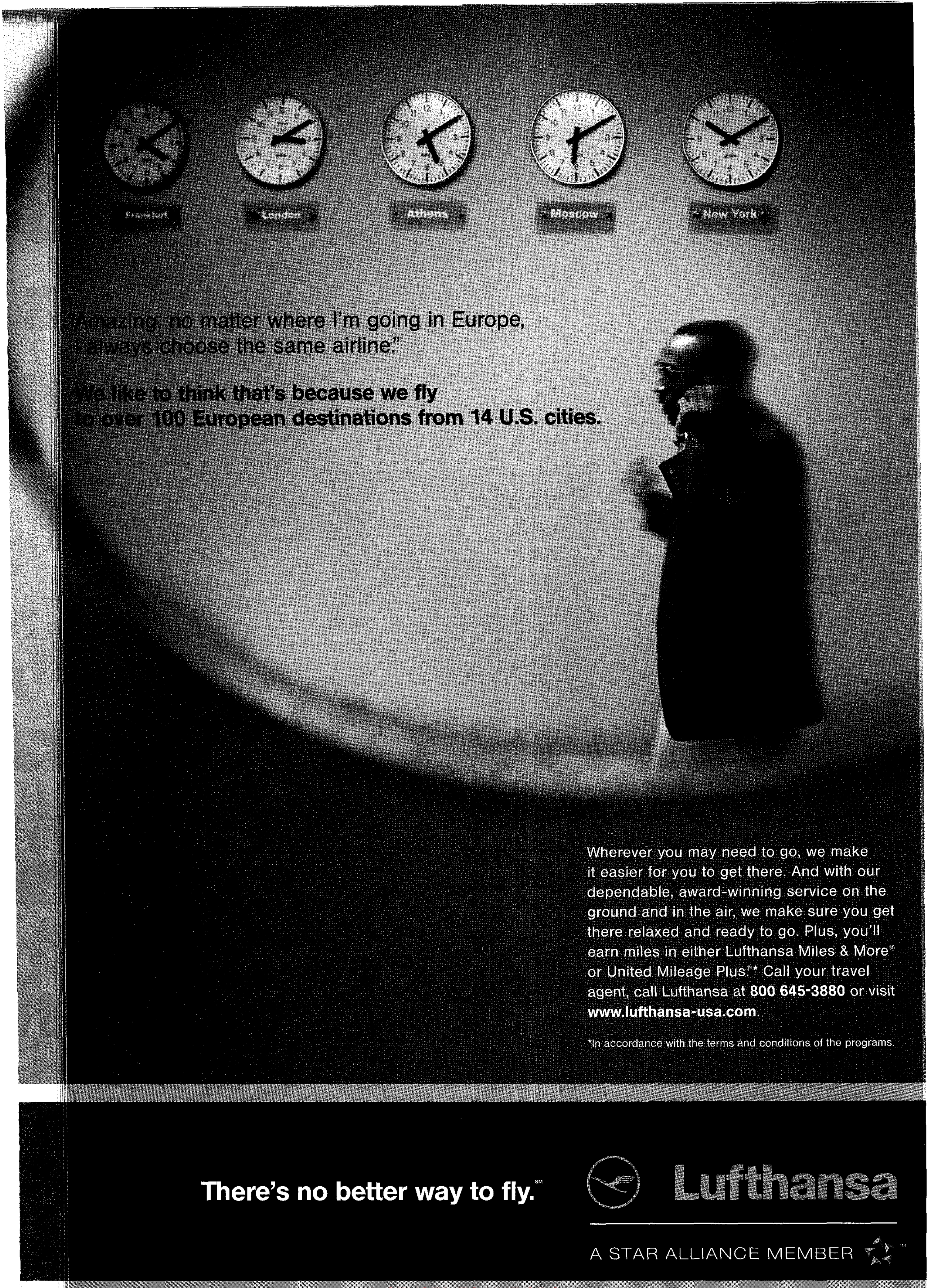
The K.G.B. is now known as the F.S.B., but its compound looks eerily unchanged: a few blocks of huge, oppressive buildings. As before, the walls outside bear no identification, no sign, no banner, nothing but a plaque honoring Yuri Andropov. But in early March a new sign appeared, a shiny copper plaque, outside the F.S.B., informing passersby that the "Church of Sophia the Divine Wisdom . . . in Lubyanka was re-created upon the blessing of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and by the zeal of the Federal Security Service." Curious. A church inside Lubyanka. The Russian Orthodox Church and the state security service do not appear to be a good match, given that tens of thousands of bishops, priests, monks, and nuns were imprisoned and executed under Lenin and Stalin. "It is necessary to conduct a merciless mass terror campaign against . . . priests," Lenin wrote in 1918. For decades afterward, this policy did not change much. Thousands of churches were destroyed. And even in the least violent times the Church hierarchy was thoroughly infiltrated by K.G.B. informers and agents.

But recently, after decades of faithlessness and militant atheism, the clergy in Russia has gained appeal and prestige. Any important undertaking gets sanctified: priests bless factories, department stores, office buildings, ships, airplanes, banks, and tanks. Even the spies pray, or say they do. And now the lovely, seventeenth-century church in Lubyanka, which had long languished as a storehouse, has been restored and reopened by the K.G.B. for the K.G.B. (The public is welcome, too.) The Russian Patriarch did not seem at all squeamish or disconcerted when, earlier this month, he sanctified the Church of Sophia, in the hope that it would help F.S.B. agents "carry out the difficult work of insuring the country's security in the face of external and internal ill-wishers, if not enemies."

The idea that the F.S.B. should have its own church was reportedly raised in 1998 by Vladimir Putin, then the F.S.B. chief. He said that he wanted his charges "to satisfy their spiritual needs." Fair enough. Evidently, K.G.B. agents need to speak to God to relieve their minds of hard memories, not least the knowledge that they, and their predecessors, are now praying where once they tortured and executed their prisoners.

—*Masha Lipman*

TOM BACHTELL



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER ™

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
AGEISM IN ADVERTISING

When ABC pursued David Letterman recently as a potential replacement for Ted Koppel in the "Nightline" slot, the rationale was straightforward. Letterman's show, although less popular than Koppel's, has better—that is, younger—demographics, so it can charge more for advertising. This is the unquestioned and untested premise of the whole TV-ad business: younger viewers are more valuable, so companies must pay more to reach them. A mere four million people watch "Dawson's Creek," but because they're young the WB network can charge about a hundred thousand dollars for a thirty-second ad; "60 Minutes" has fifteen million viewers, but they're older, so, despite their number, CBS can charge only a few thousand dollars more. To an advertiser, a twenty-five-year-old clerk is apparently worth three times as much as the fifty-year-old vice-president he works for.

Advertisers pay more to reach the kid because they think that once someone hits middle age he's too set in his ways to be susceptible to advertising. But at twenty-five he's tender. He hasn't figured out what car to drive or what beer to drink, but as soon as he does he'll be hooked. Once a Bud man, always a Bud man. As Preston Padden, the former head of ABC, said a few years ago, "Everyone agrees: brand preferences get established at an early age."

In fact, this notion of impressionable kids and hidebound geezers is little more than a fairy tale, a Madison Avenue gloss on Hollywood's cult of youth. We're all impressionable, young and old. And, if brand preferences get established at an early age, they often get disestablished a few years later. "The least brand-loyal people are people between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four," David Poltrack, a CBS executive vice-president, said last week. A 1996 study by Information Resources found that women in that age group were more likely than younger women to abandon a favorite brand. In 1997, A. C. Nielsen found that baby boomers tried as many different brands of soda, beer, and candy bars as twenty-somethings did. Brand loyalty in general seems more and more a will o' the wisp. A few years ago, a company called the National Purchase Diary found, in a multiyear survey, that almost half the people who described themselves as loyal to a brand one year were no longer loyal to it a year later. And, according to Frederick Reichheld, of the consulting firm Bain & Company, the average American company loses half its customers every five years.

What's strange about the Madison Avenue youth cult is that older consumers now make up the most lucrative market in America. People between the ages of thirty-five and sixty-four account for nearly two-thirds of consumer spending. You'd think companies would pay a premium to reach them, not demand a discount. A few companies have recognized this. Lexus, which didn't even really exist fifteen years ago, became the most popular luxury car in America by going after the over-thirty-five crowd and winning it away from Cadillac and Lincoln.

So why are companies willing to pay extra to run their ads during "Dawson's Creek"? The standard answer is that there are fewer young people out there, and that they are harder to reach. Though this explanation makes no sense economically (by this logic, advertisers ought to pay top dollar to reach sheepherders in Uzbekistan), it does have some merit psychologically, at least. People assign value to scarcity. The social psychologist Stephen Worchel once conducted an experiment in which he gave each of his subjects a chocolate-chip cookie. Half the subjects got their cookies from a jar with ten cookies in it, and the other half got their cookies from a jar with two. The people who got their cookies from the two-cookie jar consistently found their cookies more desirable and felt that they should cost more.

Or perhaps companies suffer from what economists call an internal audience problem—the people who create their ads don't look like the people who buy their products. According to a 1995 survey by *American Demographics*, the average corporate ad rep is thirty-one, and the average ad-agency account executive is twenty-eight. If the experts who tell companies how to advertise are tykes, it's not surprising that companies are convinced that they should be targeting tykes, too.

Not that they need much convincing. Advertisers have been chasing young money since the nineteen-twenties, when consultants started advising companies to woo trendsetting flappers. The baby boomers cemented the youth infatuation; the Pepsi Generation was the biggest, most affluent, and most free-spending group of young people anyone had ever seen. In the sixties, ABC persuaded Nielsen to measure a show's popularity with younger viewers so that the network could demonstrate to advertisers that it was the boomers' favorite.

You could say that advertisers have never recovered. "There's now a kind of ritualistic, inertial quality to the way ads get bought," CBS's David Poltrack says. "The old categories are increasingly irrelevant, but we keep using them." Twenty or thirty years ago, brand loyalty was more durable. Consumers—particularly older ones—were less sophisticated and less restless, and had fewer brands to choose from. So it made sense to get them while they were young. But today the boomers, steeped in advertising from cradle to couch, are comfortable navigating a marketplace of limitless choice. Even people supposedly settling into their golden years have been taught to shop at Target, pop Aleve, and drink Starbucks. Of course, there is a demographic of genuine stick-in-the-mud types, who have decided what they're after and are resistant to all arguments to the contrary. They're the ones who work in advertising.

—*James Surowiecki*

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

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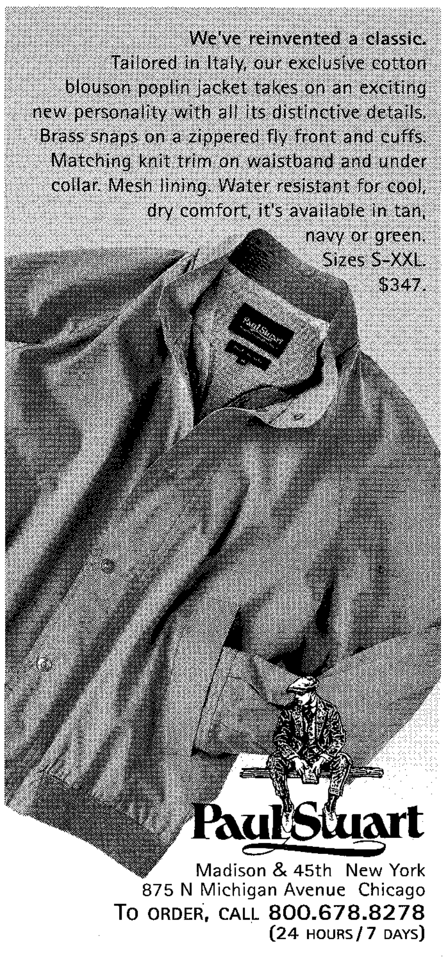
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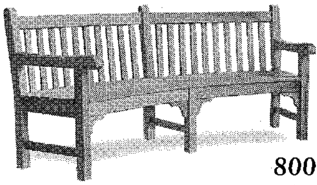
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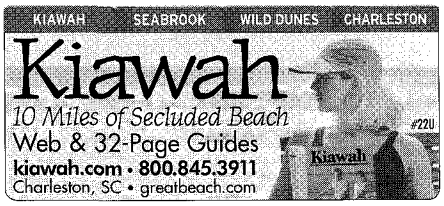
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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

THE NEXT WORLD ORDER

The Bush Administration may have a brand-new doctrine of power.

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

When there is a change of command—and not just in government—the new people often persuade themselves that the old people were much worse than anyone suspected. This feeling seems especially intense in the Bush Administration, perhaps because Bill Clinton has been bracketed by a father-son team. It's easy for people in the Administration to believe that, after an unfortunate eight-year interlude, the Bush family has resumed its governance—and about time, too.

The Bush Administration's sense that the Clinton years were a waste, or worse, is strongest in the realms of foreign policy and military affairs. Republicans tend to regard Democrats as untrustworthy in defense and foreign policy, anyway, in ways that coincide with what people think of as Clinton's weak points: an eagerness to please, a lack of discipline. Condoleezza Rice, Bush's national-security adviser, wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs* two years ago in which she contemptuously accused Clinton of "an extraordinary neglect of the fiduciary responsibilities of the commander in chief." Most of the top figures in foreign affairs in this Administration also served under the President's father. They took office last year, after what they regard as eight years of small-time fly-swatting by Clinton, thinking that they were picking up where they'd left off.

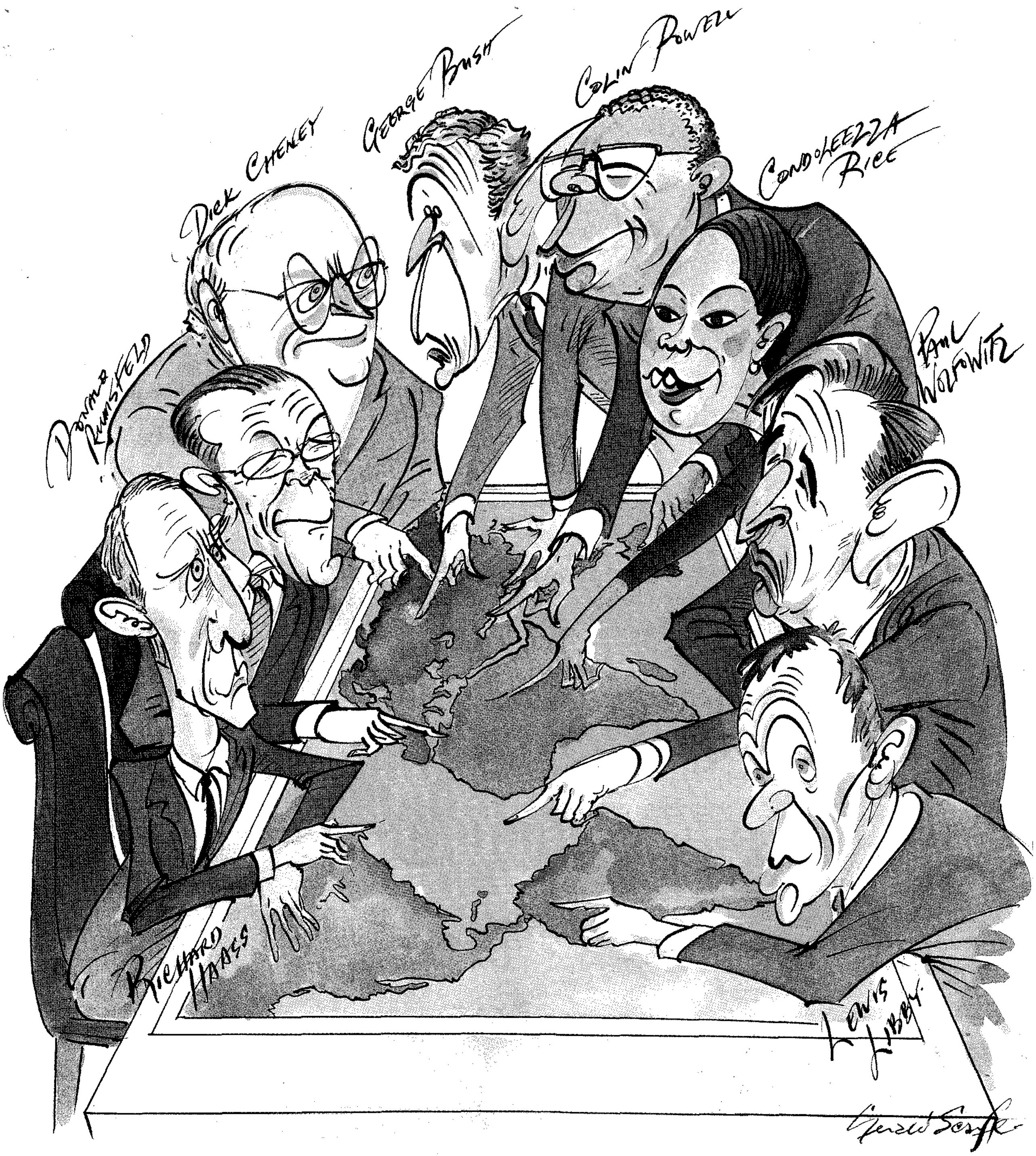
Not long ago, I had lunch with—sorry!—a senior Administration foreign-policy official, at a restaurant in Washington called the Oval Room. Early in the lunch, he handed me a twenty-seven-page report, whose cover bore the seal of the Department of Defense, an outline map of the world, and these words:

Defense Strategy for the 1990s:
The Regional Defense Strategy
Secretary of Defense
Dick Cheney
January 1993

One of the difficulties of working at the highest level of government is communicating its drama. Actors, professional athletes, and even elected politicians train for years, go through a great winnowing, and then perform publicly. People who have titles like Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense are just as ambitious and competitive, have worked just as long and hard, and are often playing for even higher stakes—but what they do all day is go to meetings and write memos and prepare briefings. How, possibly, to explain that some of the documents, including the report that the senior official handed me, which was physically indistinguishable from a high-school term paper, represent the government version of playing Carnegie Hall?

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Dick Cheney, then the Secretary of Defense, set up a "shop," as they say, to think about American foreign policy after the Cold War, at the grand strategic level. The project, whose existence was kept quiet, included people who are now back in the game, at a higher level: among them, Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense; Lewis Libby, Cheney's chief of staff; and Eric Edelman, a senior foreign-policy adviser to Cheney—generally speaking, a cohesive group of conservatives who regard themselves as bigger-thinking, tougher-minded, and intellectually bolder than most other people in Washington. (Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, shares these characteristics, and has been closely associated with Cheney for more than thirty years.) Colin Powell, then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, mounted a competing, and presumably more ideologically moderate, effort to reimagine American foreign policy and defense. A date was set—May 21, 1990—on which each team would brief Cheney for an hour; Cheney would then brief President Bush, after which Bush would make a foreign-policy address unveiling the new grand strategy.

Everybody worked for months on the "five-twenty-one brief," with a sense that



One former Pentagon official says that the Administration's conservatives are "relentless" and that "resistance is futile."

GERALD SCARFE

the shape of the post-Cold War world was at stake. When Wolfowitz and Powell arrived at Cheney's office on May 21st, Wolfowitz went first, but his briefing lasted far beyond the allotted hour, and Cheney (a hawk who, perhaps, liked what he was hearing) did not call time on him. Powell didn't get to present his alternate version of the future of the United States in the world until a couple of weeks later. Cheney briefed President Bush, using material mostly from Wolfowitz, and Bush prepared his major foreign-policy address. But he delivered it on August 2, 1990, the day that Iraq invaded Kuwait, so nobody noticed.

The team kept working. In 1992, the *Times* got its hands on a version of the material, and published a front-page story saying that the Pentagon envisioned a future in which the United States could, and should, prevent any other nation or alliance from becoming a great power. A few weeks of controversy ensued about the Bush Administration's hawks being "unilateral"—controversy that Cheney's people put an end to with denials and the counter-leak of an edited, softer version of the same material.

As it became apparent that Bush was going to lose to Clinton, the Cheney team's efforts took on the quality of a parting shot. The report that the senior official handed me at lunch had been issued only a few days before Clinton took office. It is a somewhat bland, opaque document—a "scrubbed," meaning unclassified, version of something more candid—but it contained the essential ideas of "shaping," rather than reacting to, the rest of the world, and of preventing the rise of other superpowers. Its tone is one of skepticism about diplomatic partnerships. A more forthright version of the same ideas can be found in a short book titled "From Containment to Global Leadership?," which Zalmay Khalilzad, who joined Cheney's team in 1991 and is now special envoy to Afghanistan, published a couple of years into the Clinton Administration, when he was out of government. It recommends that the United States "preclude the rise of another global rival for the indefinite future." Khalilzad writes, "It is a vital U.S. interest to preclude such a development—i.e., to be willing to use force if necessary for the purpose."

When George W. Bush was campaigning for President, he and the people around him didn't seem to be proposing a great doctrinal shift, along the lines of the policy of containment of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence which the United States maintained during the Cold War. In his first major foreign-policy speech, delivered in November of 1999, Bush declared that "a President must be a clear-eyed realist," a formulation that seems to connote an absence of world-remaking ambition. "Realism" is exactly the foreign-policy doctrine that Cheney's Pentagon team rejected, partly because it posits the impossibility of any one country's ever dominating world affairs for any length of time.

One gets many reminders in Washington these days of how much the terrorist attacks of September 11th have changed official foreign-policy thinking. Any chief executive, of either party, would probably have done what Bush has done so far—made war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda and enhanced domestic security. It is only now, six months after the attacks, that we are truly entering the realm of Presidential choice, and all indications are that Bush is going to use September 11th as the occasion to launch a new, aggressive American foreign policy that would represent a broad change in direction rather than a specific war on terrorism. All his rhetoric, especially in the two addresses he has given to joint sessions of Congress since September 11th, and all the information about his state of mind which his aides have leaked, indicate that he sees this as the nation's moment of destiny—a perception that the people around him seem to be encouraging, because it enhances Bush's stature and opens the way to more assertive policymaking.

Inside government, the reason September 11th appears to have been "a transformative moment," as the senior official I had lunch with put it, is not so much that it revealed the existence of a threat of which officials had previously been unaware as that it drastically reduced the American public's usual resistance to American military involvement overseas, at least for a while. The Clinton Administration, beginning with the "Black Hawk Down" operation in Mogadishu, during its first year, operated on the conviction that Americans were highly averse to casualties; the all-bombing Kosovo operation, in Clinton's next-to-last year, was the ideal foreign military adventure. Now that the United States has been attacked, the options are much broader. The senior official approvingly mentioned a 1999 study of casualty aversion by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies, which argued that the "mass public" is much less casualty-averse than the military or the civilian élite believes; for example, the study showed that the public would tolerate thirty thousand deaths in a military operation to prevent Iraq from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. (The American death total in the Vietnam War was about fifty-eight thousand.) September 11th presumably reduced casualty aversion even further.

Recently, I went to the White House to interview Condoleezza Rice. Rice's *Foreign Affairs* article from 2000 begins with this declaration: "The United States has found it exceedingly difficult to define its 'national interest' in the absence of Soviet power." I asked her whether that is still the case. "I think the difficulty has passed in defining a role," she said immediately. "I think September 11th was one of those great earthquakes that clarify and sharpen. Events are in much sharper relief." Like Bush, she said that opposing terrorism and preventing the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction "in the hands of irresponsible states" now define the national interest. (The latter goal, by the way, is new—in Bush's speech to Congress on September 20th, America's sole grand purpose was ending terrorism.) We talked in her West Wing office; its tall windows face the part of the White House grounds where television reporters do their standups. In her bearing, Rice seemed less crisply military than she does in public. She looked a little tired, but she was projecting a kind of missionary calm, rather than belligerence.

In the *Foreign Affairs* article, Rice came across as a classic realist, putting forth "the notions of power politics, great powers, and power balances" as the proper central concerns of the United States. Now she sounded as if she had moved closer to the one-power idea that Cheney's Pentagon team proposed ten years ago—or, at least, to the idea that the other great powers are now in harmony with the United States, because of the terrorist attacks, and can be induced to remain so. "Theoretically, the realists would predict that when you have a great power like the United States it would not be long before you had other great powers rising to challenge it or trying to balance against it," Rice said. "And I think what you're seeing is that there's at least a predilection this time to move to productive and coöperative relations with the United States, rather than to try to balance the United States. I actually think that statecraft matters in how it all comes out. It's not all foreordained."

Rice said that she had called together the senior staff people of the National Security Council and asked them to think seriously about "how do you capitalize on these opportunities" to fundamentally change American doctrine, and the shape of the world, in the wake of September 11th. "I really think this period is analogous to 1945 to 1947," she said—that is, the period when the containment doctrine took shape—"in that the events so clearly demonstrated that there is a big global threat, and that it's a big global threat to a lot of countries that you would not have normally thought of as being in the coalition. That has started shifting the tectonic plates in international politics. And it's important to try to seize on that and position American interests and institutions and all of that before they harden again."

The National Security Council is

legally required to produce an annual document called the National Security Strategy, stating the over-all goals of American policy—another government report whose importance is great but not obvious. The Bush Administration did not produce one last year, as the Clinton Administration did not in its first year. Rice said that she is working on the report now.

"There are two ways to handle this document," she told me. "One is to do it in a kind of minimalist way and just get it out. But it's our view that, since this is going to be the first one for the Bush Administration, it's important. An awful lot has happened since we started this process, prior to 9/11. I can't give you a certain date when it's going to be out, but I would think sometime this spring. And it's important that it be a real statement of what the Bush Administration sees as the strategic direction that it's going."

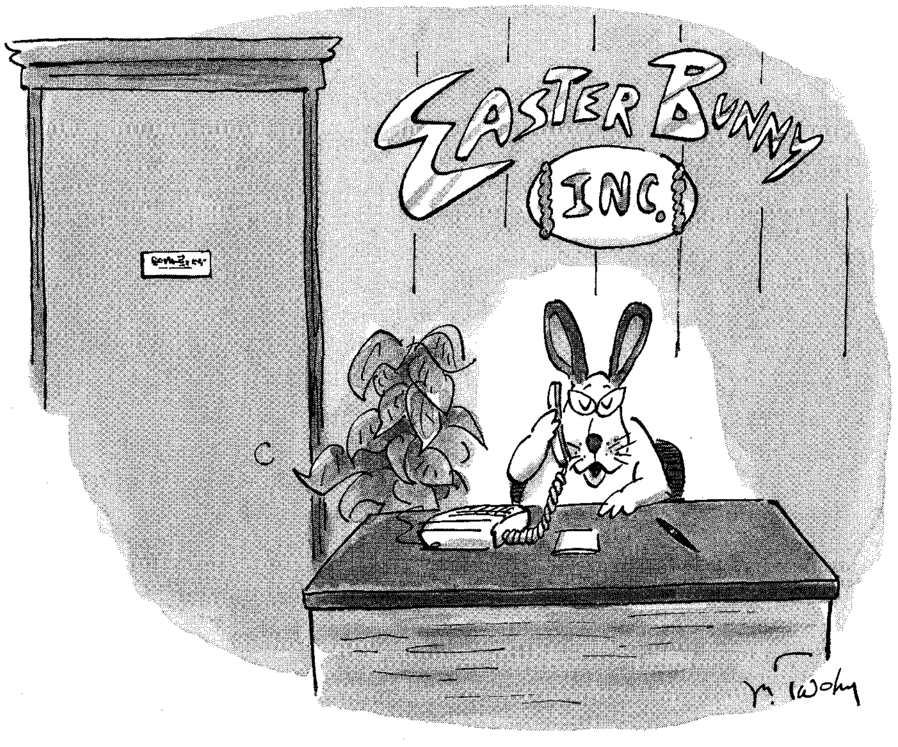
It seems clear already that Rice will set forth the hope of a more dominant American role in the world than she might have a couple of years ago. Some questions that don't appear to be settled yet, but are obviously being asked, are how much the United States is willing to operate alone in foreign affairs, and how much change it is willing to try to engender inside other countries—and to what end, and with what means. The leak a couple of weeks ago of a new American nuclear posture, adding offensive capability against "rogue states," departed from decades of official adherence to a purely defensive position, and was just one indication of the scope of the reconsideration that is going on. Is the United States now in a position to be redrawing regional maps, especially in the Middle East, and replacing governments by force? Nobody thought that the Bush Administration would be thinking in such ambitious terms, but plainly it is, and with the internal debate to the right of where it was only a few months ago.

Just before the 2000 election, a Republican foreign-policy figure suggested to me that a good indication of a Bush Administration's direction in foreign affairs would be who got a higher-ranking job, Paul Wolfowitz or Richard Haass. Haass is another veteran of the first Bush Administration, and an intellectual like Wolfowitz, but much more moderate. In 1997, he published a book titled "The Reluctant Sheriff," in which he poked a little fun at Wolfowitz's famous strategy briefing of the early nineties (he called it the "Pentagon Paper") and disagreed with its idea that the United States should try to be the world's only great power over the long term. "For better or worse, such a goal is beyond our reach," Haass wrote. "It simply is not doable." Elsewhere in the book, he disagreed with another of the Wolfowitz team's main ideas, that of the United States expanding the "democratic zone of peace": "Primacy is not to be confused with hegemony. The United States cannot compel others to become more democratic." Haass argued that the United States is becoming less dominant in the world, not more, and suggested "a revival of what might be called traditional great-power politics."

Wolfowitz got a higher-ranking job than Haass: he is Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Haass is Director of Policy Planning for the State Department—in effect, Colin Powell's big-think guy. Recently, I went to see him in his office at the State Department. On the wall of his waiting room was an array of photographs of every past director of the policy-planning staff, beginning with George Kennan, the father of the containment doctrine and the first holder of the office that Haass now occupies.

It's another indication of the way things are moving in Washington that Haass seems to have become more hawkish. I mentioned the title of his book. "Using the word 'reluctant' was itself reflective of a period when foreign policy seemed secondary, and sacrificing for foreign policy was a hard case to make," he said. "It was written when Bill Clinton was saying, 'It's the economy, stupid'—not 'It's the world, stupid.' Two things are very different now. One, the President has a much easier time making the case that foreign policy matters. Second, at the top of the national-security charts is this notion of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism."

I asked Haass whether there is a doctrine emerging that is as broad as Kennan's containment. "I think there is," he said. "What you're seeing from this Administration is the emergence of a new principle or body of ideas—I'm not sure it constitutes a doctrine—about what you might call the limits of sovereignty. Sovereignty entails obligations. One is not to massacre your own people. Another is not to support terrorism in any way. If a government fails to meet these obligations, then it forfeits some of the



"He's in the field today."

normal advantages of sovereignty, including the right to be left alone inside your own territory. Other governments, including the United States, gain the right to intervene. In the case of terrorism, this can even lead to a right of preventive, or peremptory, self-defense. You essentially can act in anticipation if you have grounds to think it's a question of when, and not if, you're going to be attacked."

Clearly, Haass was thinking of Iraq. "I don't think the American public needs a lot of persuading about the evil that is Saddam Hussein," he said. "Also, I'd fully expect the President and his chief lieutenants to make the case. Public opinion can be changed. We'd be able to make the case that this isn't a discretionary action but one done in self-defense."

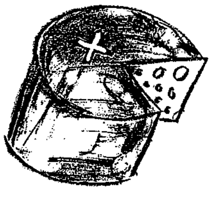
On the larger issue of the American role in the world, Haass was still maintaining some distance from the hawks. He had made a speech not long before called "Imperial America," but he told me that there is a big difference between imperial and imperial*ist*. "I just think that we have to be a little bit careful," he said. "Great as our advantages are, there are still limits. We have to have allies. We can't impose our ideas on everyone. We don't want to be fighting wars alone, so we need others to join us. American leadership, yes; but not American unilateralism. It has to be multilateral. We can't win the war against terror alone. We can't send forces everywhere. It really does have to be a collaborative endeavor."

He stopped for a moment. "Is there a successor idea to containment? I think there is," he said. "It is the idea of integration. The goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to persuade the other major powers to sign on to certain key ideas as to how the world should operate: opposition to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, support for free trade, democracy, markets. Integration is about locking them into these policies and then building institutions that lock them in even more."

The first, but by no means the last, obvious manifestation of a new American foreign policy will be the effort to remove Saddam Hussein. What the United States does in an Iraq operation will very likely dwarf what's been done so far in Afghanistan, both in terms of the scale of the operation itself and in terms of its aftermath.

Several weeks ago, Ahmad Chalabi, the head of the Iraqi National Congress, the Iraqi opposition party, came through Washington with an entourage of his aides. Chalabi went to the State Department and the White House to ask, evidently successfully, for more American funding. His main public event was a panel discussion at the American Enterprise Institute. Chalabi's leading supporter in town, Richard Perle, the prominent hawk and former Defense Department official, acted as moderator. Smiling and supremely confident, Perle opened the discussion by saying, "Evidence is mounting that the Administration is looking very carefully at strategies for dealing with Saddam Hussein." The war on terrorism, he said, will not be complete "until Saddam is successfully dealt with. And that means replacing his regime. . . . That action will be taken, I have no doubt."

Chalabi, who lives in London, is a charming, suave middle-aged man with a twinkle in his eye. He was dressed in a double-breasted pin-striped suit and a striped shirt with a white spread collar. Although he and his supporters argue that the Iraqi National Congress, with sufficient American support, can defeat Saddam just as the Northern Alliance defeated the Taliban in Afghanistan, this view hasn't won over most people in Washington. It isn't just that Chalabi doesn't look the part of a rebel military leader ("He could fight you for the last petit four on the tray over tea at the Savoy, but that's about it," one skeptical former Pentagon official told me), or that he isn't in Iraq. It's also that Saddam's military is perhaps ten times the size that the Taliban's was, and has been quite successful at putting down revolts over the last decade. The United States left Iraq in 1991 believing that Saddam might soon fall to an internal rebellion; Chalabi's supporters believe that Saddam is much weaker now, and that even signs that a serious operation was in the offing could finish him off. But non-true believers seem to be coming around to the idea that a military operation against Saddam would mean the deployment of anywhere from a hundred thousand to three hundred thousand American ground troops.



Kenneth Pollack, a former C.I.A. analyst who was the National Security Council's staff expert on Iraq during the last years of the Clinton Administration, recently caused a stir in the foreign-policy world by publishing an article in *Foreign Affairs* calling for war against Saddam. This was noteworthy because three years ago Pollack and two co-authors published an article, also in *Foreign Affairs*, arguing that the Iraqi National Congress was incapable of defeating Saddam. Pollack still doesn't think Chalabi can do the job. He believes that it would require a substantial American ground, air, and sea force, closer in size to the one we used in Kuwait in 1990-91 than to the one we are using now in Afghanistan.

Pollack, who is trim, quick, and crisp, is obviously a man who has given a briefing or two in his day. When I went to see him at his office in Washington, with a little encouragement he got out from behind his desk and walked over to his office wall, where three maps of the Middle East were hanging. "The only way to do it is a full-scale invasion," he said, using a pen as a pointer. "We're talking about two grand corps, two to three hundred thousand people altogether. The population is here, in the Tigris-Euphrates valley." He pointed to the area between Baghdad and Basra. "Ideally, you'd have the Saudis on board." He pointed to the Prince Sultan airbase, near Riyadh. "You could make Kuwait the base, but it's much easier in Saudi. You need to take western Iraq and southern Iraq"—pointing again—"because otherwise they'll fire Scuds at Israel and at the Saudi oil fields. You probably want to prevent Iraq from blowing up its own oil fields, so troops have to occupy them. And you need troops to defend the Kurds in northern Iraq." Point, point. "You go in as hard as you can, as fast as you can." He slapped his hand on the top of his desk. "You get the enemy to divide his forces, by threatening him in two places at once." His hand hit the desk again, hard. "Then you crush him." Smack.

That would be a reverberating blow. The United States has already removed the government of one country, Afghanistan, the new government is obviously shaky, and American military operations there are not completed. Pakistan, which before September 11th clearly met the new test of national unacceptability (it both harbors terrorists and has weapons of mass destruction), will also require long-term attention, since the country is not wholly under the control of the government, as the murder of Daniel Pearl demonstrated, and even parts of the government, like the intelligence service, may not be entirely under the control of the President. In Iraq, if America invades and brings down Saddam, a new government must be established—an enormous long-term task in a country where there is no obvious, plausible new leader. The prospective Iraq operation has drawn strong objections from the neighboring nations, one of which, Russia, is a nuclear superpower. An invasion would have a huge effect on the internal affairs of all the biggest Middle Eastern nations: Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and even Egypt. Events have forced the Administration to become directly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as it hadn't wanted to do. So it's really the entire region that is in play, in much the way that Europe was immediately after the Second World War.

In September, Bush rejected Paul Wolfowitz's recommendation of immediate moves against Iraq. That the President seems to have changed his mind is an indication, in part, of the bureaucratic skill of the Administration's conservatives. "These guys are relentless," one former official, who is close to the high command at the State Department, told me. "Resistance is futile." The conservatives' other weapon, besides relentlessness, is intellectualism. Colin Powell tends to think case by case, and since September 11th the conservatives have outflanked him by producing at least the beginning of a coherent, hawkish world view whose acceptance practically requires invading Iraq. If the United States applies the doctrines of Cheney's old Pentagon team, "shaping" and expanding "the zone of democracy," the implications would extend far beyond that one operation.

The outside experts on the Middle East who have the most credibility with the Administration seem to be Bernard Lewis, of Princeton, and Fouad Ajami, of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, both of whom see the Arab Middle East as a region in need of radical remediation. Lewis was invited to the White House in December to brief the senior foreign-policy staff. "One point he made is, Look, in that part of the world, nothing matters more than resolute will and force," the senior official I had lunch with told me—in other words, the United States needn't proceed gingerly for fear of inflaming the "Arab street," as long as it is prepared to be strong. The senior official also recommended as interesting thinkers on the Middle East Charles Hill, of Yale, who in a recent essay declared, "Every regime of the Arab-Islamic world has proved a failure," and Reuel Marc Gerecht, of the American Enterprise Institute, who published an article in *The Weekly Standard* about the need for a change of regime in Iran and Syria. (Those goals, Gerecht told me when we spoke, could be accomplished through pressure short of an invasion.)

Several people I spoke with predicted that most, or even all, of the nations that loudly oppose an invasion of Iraq would privately cheer it on, if they felt certain that this time the Americans were really going to finish the job. One purpose of Vice-President Cheney's recent diplomatic tour of the region was to offer assurances on that matter, while gamely absorbing all the public criticism of an Iraq operation. In any event, the Administration appears to be committed to acting forcefully in advance of the world's approval. When I spoke to Condoleezza Rice, she said that the United States should assemble "coalitions of the willing" to support its actions, rather than feel it has to work within the existing infrastructure of international treaties and organizations. An invasion of Iraq would test that policy in more ways than one: the Administration would be betting that it can continue to eliminate Al Qaeda cells in countries that publicly opposed the Iraq operation.

When the Administration submitted its budget earlier this year, it asked

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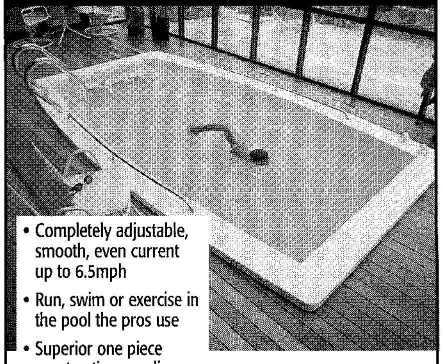

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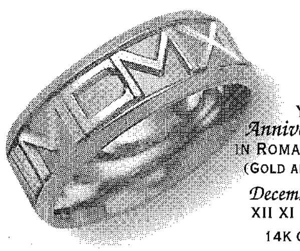

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for a forty-eight-billion-dollar increase in defense spending for fiscal 2003, which begins in October, 2002. Much of that sum would go to improve military pay and benefits, but ten billion dollars of it is designated as an unspecified contingency fund for further operations in the war on terrorism. That's probably at least the initial funding for an invasion of Iraq.

This spring, the Administration will be talking to other countries about the invasion, trying to secure basing and overflight privileges, while Bush builds up a rhetorical case for it by giving speeches about the unacceptability of developing weapons of mass destruction. A drama involving weapons inspections in Iraq will play itself out over the spring and summer, and will end with the United States declaring that the terms that Saddam offers for the inspections, involving delays and restrictions, are unacceptable. Then, probably in the late summer or early fall, the enormous troop positioning, which will take months, will begin. The Administration obviously feels confident that the United States can effectively parry whatever aggressive actions Saddam takes during the troop buildup, and hopes that its moves will destabilize Iraq enough to cause the Republican Guard, the military key to the country, to turn against Saddam and topple him on its own. But the chain of events leading inexorably to a full-scale American invasion, if it hasn't already begun, evidently will begin soon.

Lewis (Scooter) Libby, who was the principal drafter of Cheney's future-of-the-world documents during the first Bush Administration, now works in an office in the Old Executive Office Building, overlooking the West Wing, where he has a second, smaller office. A packet of public-relations material prompted by the recent paperback publication of his 1996 novel, "The Apprentice," quotes the *Times'* calling him "Dick Cheney's Dick Cheney," which seems like an apt description: he appears absolutely sure of himself, and, whether by coincidence or as a result of the influence of his boss, speaks in a tough, confidential, gravelly rumble. Like Condoleezza Rice and Bush himself, he gives the impression of having calmly accepted the idea that the project of war and reconstruction which the Administration has now taken on may be a little exhausting for those charged with carrying it out but is unquestionably right, the only truly prudent course.

When I went to see Libby, not long ago, I asked him whether, before September 11th, American policy toward terrorism should have been different. He went to his desk and got out a large black loose-leaf binder, filled with typewritten sheets interspersed with foldout maps of the Middle East. He looked through it for a long minute, formulating his answer.

"Let us stack it up," he said at last. "Somalia, 1993; 1994, the discovery of the Al Qaeda-related plot in the Philippines; 1993, the World Trade Center, first bombing; 1993, the attempt to assassinate President Bush, former President Bush, and the lack of response to that, the lack of a serious response to that; 1995, the Riyadh bombing; 1996, the Khobar bombing; 1998, the Kenyan embassy bombing and the Tanzanian embassy bombing; 1999, the plot to launch millennium attacks; 2000, the bombing of the Cole. Throughout this period, infractions on inspections by the Iraqis, and eventually the withdrawal of the entire inspection regime; and the failure to respond significantly to Iraqi incursions in the Kurdish areas. No one would say these challenges posed easy problems, but if you take that long list and you ask, 'Did we respond in a way which discouraged people from supporting terrorist activities, or activities clearly against our interests? Did we help to shape the environment in a way which discouraged further aggressions against U.S. interests?,' many observers conclude no, and ask whether it was then easier for someone like Osama bin Laden to rise up and say credibly, 'The Americans don't have the stomach to defend themselves. They won't take casualties to defend their interests. They are morally weak.' "

Libby insisted that the American response to September 11th has not been standard or foreordained. "Look at what the President has done in Afghanistan," he said, "and look at his speech to the joint session of Congress"—meaning the State of the Union Message, in January. "He made it clear that it's an important area. He made it clear that we believe in expanding the zone of democracy even in this difficult part of the world. He made it clear that we stand by our friends and defend our interests. And he had the courage to identify those states which present a problem, and to begin to build consensus for action that would need to be taken if there is not a change of behavior on their part. Take the Afghan case, for example. There are many other courses that the President could have taken. He could have waited for juridical proof before we responded. He could have engaged in long negotiations with the Taliban. He could have failed to seek a new relationship with Pakistan, based on its past nuclear tests, or been so afraid of weakening Pakistan that we didn't seek its help. This list could go on to twice or three times the length I've mentioned so far. But, instead, the President saw an opportunity to refashion relations while standing up for our interests. The problem is complex, and we don't know yet how it will end, but we have opened new prospects for relations not only with Afghanistan, as important as it was as a threat, but with the states of Central Asia, Pakistan, Russia, and, as it may develop, with the states of Southwest Asia more generally."

We moved on to Iraq, and the question of what makes Saddam Hussein unacceptable, in the Administration's eyes. "The issue is not inspections," Libby said. "The issue is the Iraqis' promise not to have weapons of mass destruction, their promise to recognize the boundaries of Kuwait, their promise not to threaten other countries, and other promises that they made in '91, and a number of U.N. resolutions, including all the other problems I listed. Whether it was wise or not—and that is the subject of debate—Iraq was given a second chance to abide by international norms. It failed to take that chance then, and annually for the next ten years."

"What's your level of confidence," I asked him, "that the current regime will, in fact, change its behavior in a way that you will be satisfied by?"

He ran his hand over his face and then gave me a direct gaze and spoke slowly and deliberately. "There is no basis in Iraq's past behavior to have confidence in good-faith efforts on their part to change their behavior." ♦

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YOU CAN HELP

BY BILL FRANZEN

We need your help now—not sometime soon—in locating Richard Wynn, who may also go by Rick Wynn, Ricardo Wynn, Ricardo McWynn, Ricardo McDonald, Ronald McDonald, Dr. Ronald R. McDonald, Federico R. McWinn, the Reverend Dick Winn, or Chenk Yaw Fung.

Mr. Wynn, a.k.a. Richard Wynn, Jr., was last reported seen in New Orleans. He is now believed to have fled to Omaha, or, possibly, to Tucson or Davenport, or to a room behind a live-bait shop near a lake someplace. Or a river.

We desperately need your participation—wherever you might be—in catching this armed and dangerous criminal. Look around. He might be the guy insulting the topless dancers at one of your usual hangouts. Or he could just as easily be the guy getting strip-searched alongside you in a gambling raid. And the time to act is right now—*not* sometime next week. Because the quicker we throw this thug behind bars the sooner average Americans like you can get back to leading normal lives.

Wynn, who was born in Tampa, or, perhaps, Hamburg or Copenhagen, was allegedly adopted and reared in Akron, or, more likely, Albuquerque or Utica. He recently used the Social Security number 123-45-6789, and all variations thereof. Birthdates used by this fugitive, which include 4/1/50 and 9/31/54, should arouse suspicion, too.

Wynn, however, should be a cinch to identify, what with his head of telltale gray hair. So who knows? That could have been him in front of you at your local convenience store, buying hair dye while you picked up a Scratch-Five and a carton of Camels. By any chance, was there a mole on the back of his neck? Granted, Wynn is exactly the sort of desperado who would have had it removed, unless, of course, he's back to hiding it with a turtleneck sweater or a clerical collar.

Be aware, too, of a long, hard-to-miss scar on his upper lip—although it might be completely hidden by a mustache, real or peel-off, and conceivably handlebar or Fu Manchu style. In fact, expect this master of disguise to have had extensive plastic surgery, including, perhaps, work performed on a zebra tattoo on his right biceps. By this time, it may have been transformed to resemble, say, the American flag—this according to a dermatologist who spoke on the condition of anonymity from an undisclosed island in the Caribbean (not the actual location).

Of course, if Wynn's appearance isn't a dead giveaway don't be discouraged. Discouragement is a luxury that no American can afford right now; top law-enforcement officials, who declined to be identified, all agree that the highest level of danger will continue to exist until Richard Wynn, a.k.a. Officer Wynn, is apprehended. And this is where you come in: we're counting on you to spot him right away—*not* when things at work ease up.

The real key to positively I.D.-ing this lowlife will most likely involve his employment. Look for Wynn to be working as a baggage handler or cabbie or security guard, or, not improbably, as a movie projectionist or 1-800 operator. Or else he'll be driving trucks cross-country; keep your eyes open the next time you spend the night in a highway rest area. Or, just maybe, he's the concession-stand worker out at the greyhound track who grilled up your bacon double cheeseburger at breakfast yesterday. Bottom line: look for Wynn to be working anyplace where jewelry, boats, cars, guns, animals, or sports memorabilia are sold.

Think you've seen this public menace, or someone closely matching the description above? Then act quickly—our toll-free number is open around the clock. You needn't identify yourself. Just don't be too surprised if we already know exactly who you are. ♦

LETTER FROM SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

ENDLESS SPRING

How much spring break can anyone stand?

BY REBECCA MEAD

It was not an auspicious start to the day when Chip Olson awoke and realized that he was sharing his bed with someone else, and that the someone in question was Joshua Milrad. Josh is one of Chip's best friends; but, even so, there were other people Chip would rather wake up next to. Chip rolled out of bed, wandered into the living room of his rental condo, and turned on the Weather Channel, only to discover that the forecast promised temperatures in the sixties and chilly winds from the north. This hardly seemed the kind of climate that would incline coeds to shed their bikini tops and cavort with addled frat boys, and the prospect of shedding and cavorting was what had brought Chip and Josh, in the third week of March last year, to South Padre Island, Texas, a resort not far from the Mexican border which is growing in popularity among the million or so American students who go on spring break every year.

Chip Olson is thirty-one, and over the past fourteen years he has spent a total of fifty-two weeks on spring break. He is tall and skinny, and has a long, thin face that gives him the aspect of a friendly rodent. Chip grew up in Chicago, and he had his earliest spring-break experience when he was a freshman in high school and went to Fort Lauderdale for a lacrosse camp. "I remember seeing all the chaos," he told me. "The craziness, the sheer numbers of people. The energy and the excitement that were in the air!" In his freshman year at the University of Illinois, he became a spring breaker himself, riding down to South Padre Island on a chartered bus: thirty-two hours trapped in a moving Bierkeller occupied by sixty experimental drinkers whose enthusiasm for alcohol proved to be pungently greater than their tolerance.

Even so, he went back the next year, and the next, and while still in college he started his own business designing T-shirts, which he sold at music festivals and other gatherings of young people. For five years after graduation, Chip lived out of a backpack, and shared his girlfriend's apartment in Boston whenever he took time off the road. Every March and April, he went down to South Padre or to Panama City, where there was always a market for his T-shirts, and where he worked promoting organized events: wet-T-shirt contests, dance parties at night clubs, and the like.

Like "Big Brother," with a lot of booze and bikinis. Photograph by Larry Fink.

In 1997, while sharing an apartment in Panama City with a bunch of other professional spring breakers, Chip started to think about videotaping the lives of his friends. He felt that MTV's spring-break coverage offered a bowdlerized version of the phenomenon. His idea was a kind of proto-"Big Brother," but with a lot of booze and bikinis and hormonal youths. Accordingly, he returned to Panama City Beach in 1998 with a film crew headed by his friend Josh Milrad. Josh, who is also thirty-one, and is solidly built, with dark hair, good teeth, and a shiny, well-groomed complexion, is an aspiring movie director who lives in Los Angeles. He makes a living doing production work on music videos and made-for-TV movies for the USA Network. Josh had little spring-break experience per se, although his education at Beverly Hills High School and at Cal State's film school meant that he was well acquainted with the practices of tanned, handsome young people in sunny climates.

Chip and Josh spent a month filming an hour-long video, which they called "Spring Break Uncensored." Viewers are introduced to "funnelling" beer through a beer bong. (A beer bong is a pitcher or a kitchen funnel to which a plastic tube is appended: you fill the pitcher with beer and raise it high, then tilt your head back and let the beer flood through the tube straight down your gullet.) They learn about sex-on-the-beach contests, which involve couples simulating debilitatingly sandy intercourse in a multiplicity of improbable positions. There are segments devoted to unsightly practices such as nipple piercing and stomach branding, and a psychedelic sequence designed to convey the experience of spring break on Ecstasy. There is much footage of shrieking girls in bikinis, and intoxicated young men with silly haircuts and no realistic hope of getting laid. The film is a documentary of sorts; Adam Lazzare-White, formerly known to daytime-television audiences as Nathan (Kong) Hastings on "The Young and the Restless," serves as the program's host. The video cost about thirty thousand dollars to make—Chip's life savings. When it was completed, he shopped it around for a television deal, and considered the economics of releasing it straight to video stores.

Then the plan unravelled. While watching late-night cable television one evening, Chip and Josh saw an ad for a videotape called "Girls Gone Wild: Spring Break Uncensored," which also featured shrieking girls in bikinis, although these girls were taking off their bikinis for the camera. "It was two in the morning," Josh told me. "I almost fell out of my bed." Chip and Josh ordered a copy for $19.95. But when the "Girls Gone Wild" tape arrived, they were reassured that it had grown out of artistic aspirations quite different from theirs. "Girls Gone Wild" had no characters and no dialogue, and consisted of nothing but girls who looked suspiciously like strippers flashing their breasts and gyrating lewdly in front of the camera to a chorus of animalistic grunting. "Our tape is well cut; it's got humor *and* it's got T. & A.," Josh explained to me. Unfortunately for Chip and Josh, over the next year the "Girls Gone Wild" brand (which extends to "Girls Gone Wild College Spring Break: Mardi Gras Uncensored" and "The Best of Girls Gone Wild," among other works) took off dramatically, becoming a frat-house favorite. Meanwhile, their video languished without a distribution deal, and sold fewer than a thousand copies.

In spite of such ill fortune, Chip still believes that audiences want more than breasts and bottoms. "A lot of people are buying the 'Girls Gone Wild' tape, and I think a lot of people aren't really happy with what they get," Chip told me. "Which means that now we are in a good position to market our tape."

South Padre is a thirty-four-mile-long barrier island a half hour's drive from Brownsville, Texas. It is accessible only by a slender bridge, at the foot of which there are signs warning drivers to beware of low-flying pelicans. The northern end of the island is undeveloped, and consists of mesmerizing sculptural dunes. Farther south, dozens of large hotels and condominiums hulk along the oceanfront. The main drag, Padre Boulevard, is lined with single-story shops painted in primary colors which sell T-shirts and surfwear. A few years ago, the mayor of South Padre, Edmund K. Cyganiewicz, signed a local proclamation that made it an offense to wear a tie on the island.

The year-round population of South Padre is a little more than two thousand, of which the majority are retirees; during March, however, a hundred and eighty-six thousand students pass through the resort. The biggest week of the year is Texas week, during which twelve thousand students, mostly from the state's colleges, descend on the island. According to a study that was undertaken in 2000 by the Center for Tourism Research at the University of Texas-Pan American, the average South Padre spring breaker is a twenty-one-year-old male who spends about eight hundred dollars during a five-night stay, including two hundred and sixty-six dollars on accommodation, just over a hundred dollars on dining out, sixty dollars on groceries, and a hundred and forty dollars on "recreation." (The study does not specify in which category alcohol purchases are included.) Spring breakers spent an estimated hundred and fifty-six million dollars in South Padre in 2000. The poorest students may not be able to afford spring break, but it is by no means an activity reserved for the élite—many of the students attend state schools and make spring break affordable by sleeping eight to a

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The heart of spring break in South Padre is the beachfront of the Radisson Hotel. Every afternoon, the yellow-brown sand fills with students and their detritus: the empty crushed cans of cheap Keystone beer; the condoms or deodorant sticks or bottles of Nair that are handed out as promotional gifts by sponsors; the orphaned beach towels half submerged in the drifting sand as if by ash from a volcano. During the spring-break season, Coca-Cola sets up a soundstage from which a d.j. plays bouncy rap music—Baha Men, Nelly—and on which daily wet-T-shirt contests are conducted. Gray ranks of portable toilets are set up near the waterfront, obscuring the view of the ocean.

It was to the Radisson that Chip and Josh headed around noon, on their first day of filming a sequel to their video. They drove there in Chip's rental S.U.V., and walked through the lobby and out to the beach, where Josh started shooting. "Do you want to see a keg stand?" shouted a bunch of shirtless fraternity brothers who were crowded around a half-buried keg of beer. Josh assumed his customary filming stance: crouched at the knees, with the camera bent at a zany angle. A girl in a blue bikini stood unsteadily on her hands on the edge of the keg and sucked beer from a siphon, her posture maintained with the helpful support of a half-dozen frat boys holding her legs and torso. Chip and Josh filmed her as she righted herself and wiped beer from her chin, then they dived further into the throng on the beach. Josh had a few standard questions that he used on his interview subjects—"What's the craziest thing you've seen so far?" and "What kind of guys do you like?" were two of the most useful. ("A couple having sex in a car" and "Anyone, so long as he's got something between his legs" were among the answers he received.)

They filmed everything, and the students were delighted to oblige, though they didn't seem to know quite who Chip and Josh were. Chip looked downcast whenever someone shouted out, "Hey, it's 'Girls Gone Wild,' " which happened a lot. Every time someone asked Josh whom they were working for, Josh would say something that included a combination of the words "independent documentary," and "international television" and "video stores."

On the grounds of the Radisson, Chip and Josh found a group of girls from Boston who had spread their beach towels on the grass and were sunning themselves, topping off toast-colored tans they had acquired from intensive sun-lamp sessions back home. "What are you planning to do here?" Josh asked a pretty, plumpish girl in a bikini and a jaunty black cowboy hat. "I'm planning to kiss girls," she said. She looked in the direction of a skinny blonde on the next towel. "I kissed her last night." The blond girl looked at the camera nervously.

"Let's see you kiss her again," Josh said, crouching and elevating the lens. Cowboy Hat leaned over, smooched her blond friend, then smirked at Josh, who nodded encouragingly. Chip hovered in the background with a clipboard and a sheaf of release forms. Then a hugely overweight boy with a pudgy, sunburned face ambled over. He was wearing a T-shirt bearing the slogan "I Like Breasts," stretched across his own pillowy pectorals. He told Josh, "You don't even need to ask for a flash when you're wearing this T-shirt. You just wear the shirt, and they do it." The girls giggled and blushed, all except Cowboy Hat, who grabbed her bikini top with both hands, yanked it upward, tilted her head to one side, and beamed. Josh whirled around just in time to capture the moment on camera. "First of the day," he said.

The beach-movie genre began in 1959, when Columbia Pictures released "Gidget," in which Sandra Dee learns about surf and love from James Darren, and which introduces the signal elements: teen-agers, sand, cars, and adolescent erotic impulses—a formula that endured through two Gidget sequels and, during the course of the nineteen-sixties, more than a hundred other assorted beach movies. In 1960, M-G-M released "Where the Boys Are," about college kids on spring break in Florida, and then followed up with a series of beach movies starring Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello, including "Beach Party," in 1963, and "How to Stuff a Wild Bikini" and "Beach Blanket Bingo," both in 1965. (In their book "The Beach: A History of Paradise on Earth," Lena Lenček and Gideon Bosker provide a historical overview of the beach movie, including such details as the fact that Funicello's contract with Disney contained a proviso stipulating that she could not wear a bikini: in her beach movies she appears only in one-piece bathing suits or conservative two-pieces.)

The beach movie was chiefly a sixties phenomenon, but the seventies and eighties saw the cinematic celebration of teen-age excess in movies such as "Animal House," the packaged frat-

THE TOAST

After I've made it stumbling through the day
And liquid light surrounds the window sill,
After paper buds have furled their wrinkled way
And, tired, I've relaxed my will,
I think of you and of your warm embrace
And recall the disturbed calmness of your face
In repose. And all the sorrow I've contained
This brilliant Tuesday in this lonely place
Vanishes. It topples down the hours strained
Till memory leaves another trace:
The time you smiled and covered me with kisses
And clicked your teeth to mine in a brisk toast,
And I think, At least I have that clinking ghost.

—*Susan Minot*

house mayhem that is a direct precursor to the spring-break television coverage of today. More than any other medium, MTV, which has been broadcasting from the beach for seven years, has turned spring break into a consumer spectacle. News shows, meanwhile, have discovered that coverage of the "Do you know where your children are?" variety can provide good ratings; during the spring-break period last year, "MSNBC Investigates" broadcast an hour-long show about the exploits of a bunch of coeds getting drunk, getting tattooed, and getting intimate with boys: "Girls Gone Wild" for the worried parental set.

Josh Milrad did not go to film school to make "Spring Break Uncensored." By last spring, his directing credits included what he described to me as two "artsy" shorts, including a film called "The Passage," about two twenty-year-old brothers who are spirited back to sixteenth-century England, and "In Case of Emergency," a sci-fi thriller set on the moon. Josh cites as his artistic influences Martin Scorsese, Spike Lee, and Ron Howard.

There are a few moments in "Spring Break Uncensored" that make Josh proud. "The twenty-second tracking shot of the three-foot bong—I think, of all the videos I've ever made, that's my favorite shot," he told me. "If that was in a feature, it would really be something." Josh says that if he and Chip ever earn any money on "Spring Break Uncensored 2," what he would really like to do is take some of the more poignant footage he has gathered over the years and make a third tape—he refers to the imagined set as a "trilogy"—which would show the dark side of spring break. "When we were in Panama City, we found these homeless kids who were living in storage lockers," he said. "I asked them where they hoped to be in a year's time, and they said, 'Moving to the bigger storage lockers.' It would be like a '60 Minutes' segment."

Chip and Josh prefer to turn their lens on what might be characterized as jackass culture. When they are filming, their favorite moments are the ones that bear the closest resemblance to slapstick—except that in slapstick the pratfalls are choreographed and painless, whereas the clowning of "Spring Break Uncensored" is artless. The buff, depilated football player whom they have captured smashing empty beer cans against his skull really is smashing empty beer cans against his skull. They also like taping the old folks who come to South Padre to watch, of whom there are a surprising number. One day on the beach, Josh interviewed an elderly gentleman in swim trunks, asking him what he made of all the nubile young flesh. "No matter how old the bird dog, you can't help but quiver when you see the quail," the gentleman replied. Then his wife, who was seventy, did a beer bong with a bunch of football players.

Chip and Josh know that they have what many men would consider the perfect vocation: they get to run around in the sun asking impertinent questions of near-naked girls, who are usually happily forthcoming. On many occasions, Josh finds himself with a bethonged bottom thrust in his face, or is witness to the Dionysian abandonment of inhibitions, or of a bikini top. When Chip and Josh are on the beach, they are often followed by a loose swarm of boys with camcorders who hope that if the girls shed their tops for "Spring Break Uncensored" they might be able to score a little amateur action themselves.

Chip sometimes seemed a little intimidated by the girls on spring break, because they can be very bold. He was feeling confident this time, though, sitting at a waterfront bar called Tequila Frogs, which is one of his favorite spring-break haunts. For years, as a spring breaker, Chip would have to wait in line to get into a place like Tequila Frogs. "Now we can walk right to the front," he told me. "And that's really all that matters in life—being able to get into places without having to wait in line." Tequila Frogs is a sprawling, multilevel timber building that feels less like a night club than like the stage set of a ranch from a spaghetti Western, not least because so many of the spring breakers in attendance on this particular afternoon were wearing cowboy hats. The highlight of the afternoon was a series of contests involving water and whipped cream. Chip and Josh positioned themselves in

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coveted spots at the foot of the stage.

The first event was a wet-boxer-shorts contest. "I gotta shoot some butts, I guess," Josh said, as he zoomed in on a posse of football players with huge, glistening, Naired chests, sodden shorts, and cowboy hats. This was all reminiscent of the cruising scene on Manhattan's West Side docks on a summer evening, except that the football players took great pains, as they undulated in time to the music, not to undulate in time to each other. Afterward, there was a whipped-cream contest for couples. The cans of cream ran out after the first couple of contestants, but that didn't seem to matter. "I am so bored with shooting this," Josh said, as a girl in a blue bikini received simulated oral sex from her partner. "It isn't even sexy anymore. Unless I could shoot it with a crane or something."

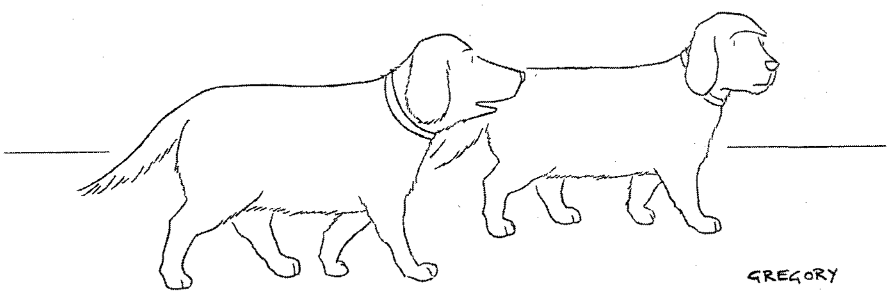
The last event of the afternoon was a wet-T-shirt contest. The girls came out wearing not T-shirts, exactly, but bits of T-shirt that had been cut into the most figure-revealing shapes imaginable, then tied implausibly around their upper bodies. The girl from Boston who had come to Padre to kiss girls got up onstage, wearing her scraps of T-shirt and a translucent flesh-colored thong. She had fake tattoos stuck to her buttocks, which she kept slapping playfully. None of the slapping helped her into the finals, however, which were dominated by a slender woman with dark hair, a red thong, and a red cowboy hat who looked as though she might be a dance major with a specialty in mime; a black girl with braids and pierced nipples; and a pretty girl with short blond hair who might have been referred to as gamine were it not for the extremely womanly dimensions of her perfectly round breasts. She danced as if she'd spent a lot of time in topless bars, and she was clearly the crowd favorite. ("They're fake," one fellow in the front row said to his friend. "They are?" "You can see the scars." "I don't care, I like them anyway.") The blond girl won—a prize of a hundred dollars. After the contest, Josh wiped the water and whipped cream from his camera, and he and Chip loaded their equipment into the rental car.

"I hate when that happens," Chip said. "When a professional wins."

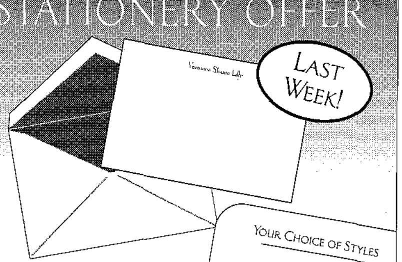
"Yeah, with those perfect round ones," said Josh. "You could calculate pi with those things."

The triumph of the unmistakably fake breast over the real is, it could be argued, the perfect metaphor for this pop-cultural moment. The popularity of reality television, with its contrived conflicts and hokey simulacra, demonstrates a conscious enjoyment of the unmistakably fake. "Girls Gone Wild," with its non-stop libidinousness and its suspiciously practiced talent, is likewise a knowing fantasia on spring break—it shows a vision of spring break that not even the most hopeful of frat boys actually expect to experience. Though Chip likes to compare his concept with that of a reality-TV show—real people thrown into extraordinary circumstances—the fact is that he and Josh have found themselves on the wrong side of the fake-real divide. "Spring Break Uncensored" has no knowing fakery about it. Even though it has beer bongs and breasts, it is, in its own peculiar, incomplete way, a very earnest work. As Josh told me one day, "Our stuff is a bit more Discovery Channel than Spice Channel, if you know what I mean."

And, just as the fake breast is both visually persuasive and unmistakably inau-



"What I do as an artist is take an ordinary object—say, a lamppost—and, by urinating on it, transform it into something that is uniquely my own."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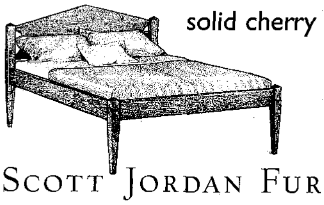
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thentic, so the mayhem of spring break is at once convincing and implausible. Spring break provides students with an opportunity to experience safe abandon. The usual rules are suspended: the watchword among the students Chip and Josh were filming was "What happens in Padre, stays in Padre." The fact that South Padre is an island only increased the atmosphere of exemption. At the same time, the disorder of spring break is surprisingly orderly: it's organized chaos, sponsored by Coke and Nair and the Chase bank.

On Thursday night, Chip and Josh joined about seventy students at a bonfire party on a remote mainland beach, a ten-minute boat ride from the South Padre dock. All week, Chip had been encouraging students to go: "It'll be like 'Temptation Island' meets 'Survivor,' " he said. It was a warm night, and girls in tube tops were bopping to the asynchronous tones of Limp Bizkit. Someone handed out glow sticks. But there was something halfhearted about the whole endeavor—the spring breakers mostly stood around the fire listlessly, as if waiting to be told what to do.

Chip liked the bonfire. "This kind of reminds me of a Grateful Dead concert," he said. Still, he seemed weary after so many days and nights of chasing around with a camera, after fifty-two weeks of parties and contests and late nights and shared condos and bad meals and cheap beer. What, exactly, was it that he liked about spring break in the first place? "I'm not sure I do like it," he said thoughtfully. "I've been travelling so long it's become just another place to go. I would really like it if I didn't ever come back. But, then, I said that last year."

As Chip talked, he looked at the flickering bonfire. Beyond, Josh was circling, filming a kid doing animal impersonations and beating his breast like a gorilla. "There is one thing I do like about spring break," Chip added. "I am not sure the students understand it, but they are breaking the mold of their conditioning just by being here. When they go back to school, they'll be living in a little box again, but, here, they've gotten out of the box, whether they realize it or not. Maybe there's nothing else in America that does that. Tribes used to have rites of passage for adolescents. Indians would take peyote. We don't have anything like that, but maybe this is the closest that we have. These kinds of things open people up subconsciously. It opens them up to be a bit more free. It's the closest thing we have to the sixties." Then Josh walked over to join Chip, a big grin on his face, and said, "I just got one guy saying, 'I hope someone brought some sauerkraut and mustard, because there's a lot of sausages here.' "

Shortly after returning to Los Angeles last spring, Chip and Josh began work on their first feature film, "String Theory." Josh co-directed with the screenwriter, Jacob Freydont-Attie, who is an old friend from school. Chip was the associate producer, which meant that he scouted locations, found venders, and was called upon to hold the boom. "String Theory," which Josh and Chip expect to begin screening this month, takes place in a single day in contemporary Los Angeles, and touches upon, among other themes, theoretical mathematics, political corruption, homelessness, race, AIDS, childhood innocence, naturally occurring hallucinogens, Eros, and God. It does not have much in common with "Spring Break Uncensored," though there is an oceanside scene in which the hero, an H.I.V.-positive surfer and spiritual seeker named David, romps naked on the sand (the actor wore a flesh-colored thong) and persuades the uptight female lawyer he has just met to try Boogie-boarding with him. For the scene in the water, Chip and Josh spent two hours bobbing around on an inflatable raft, trying not to drop the camera. "After shooting 'Spring Break,' working with real actors is a pleasure," Josh said. They've also begun work on a movie written by two other friends, Adam G and Derek Basco, called "Naked Brown Men," which stars four Filipino brothers from Northern California as themselves. In addition, Chip and Josh are negotiating with a video company for a deal that will bring "Spring Break Uncensored"—and a pair of sequels—to stores at last.

Josh does not plan to go on spring break this year. When I asked Chip a few weeks ago whether he intended to go, he sighed and said, "I hope not," and he sounded almost as though he meant it. ♦

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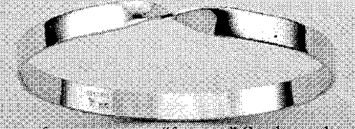

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ANNALS OF POLITICS

THE COMPASSION OF LYNDON JOHNSON

What an incident in a small South Texas town demonstrated about a new senator's commitment to civil rights.

BY ROBERT A. CARO

During the last weeks of his tormented Presidency, as Lyndon Johnson was about to give up the post he had sought all his life, he delivered a speech in New York City at a dinner of the National Urban League, and, he wrote later, as he looked out over the audience and saw many of the black leaders in the fight for civil rights, he remembered a time when things had been very different for his Presidency. "We had seen many of our towering dreams come true," he recalled thinking; the civil-rights laws that were passed while he was President had represented the "peaks of victory" in the crusade for social justice in America.

Indeed they had. It was those laws—laws passed because of the inspiring words with which he presented them ("We shall overcome," he said once, as a Congress came cheering to its feet, and Martin Luther King, watching the speech on television, began to cry), and because of the savage determination with which he drove them to passage—that gave black Americans the vote and made great strides toward ending discrimination in public accommodations, in education, in employment, even in private housing. Lyndon Johnson was the greatest champion Americans of color had in the White House during the twentieth century, the greatest champion they had in all the halls of government. He was the lawmaker for the poor and the downtrodden and the oppressed, the restorer of at least a measure of dignity to those who so desperately needed it, the redeemer of the promises made to them by America. He was to be the President who, above all Presidents save Abraham Lincoln, codified compassion, the President who wrote at least a measure of justice into the statute books by which America is governed. And the victories that Lyndon Johnson won for civil rights began even before his Presidency—in 1957—and the victory he won in that year was perhaps the hardest-won victory of all.

In 1957, Johnson was Majority Leader of the Senate. The speed of his rise to that post had been unprecedented. At the time he arrived in the Senate, on January 3, 1949, seniority governed all its workings. New members were not supposed to speak much, or at all, on the floor during their first year or two, and during the remainder of their six-year term to speak only infrequently, and to participate in other Senate activities in a largely apprentice role. After *his* first two years in the Senate, Lyndon Johnson was the Assistant Leader of his party's senators. In another two years—on January 2, 1953—while he was still in his first term, he became his party's leader, the Senate's Democratic Leader. (Since the Democrats were in the minority, he was the Minority Leader.) Only forty-four, he was the youngest senator in history to be elected a party leader. Two years later, when the Democrats won control of the Senate, he became Majority Leader, the most powerful man in the Senate, after just a single term there. Johnson's assistant Harry McPherson was to quote him as saying, "I do understand power, whatever else may be said about me. I know where to look for it and how to use it," and if his rise to the leadership proved that he could indeed look for it (often in places where senators had not customarily thought to look)—and find it—once he became Leader he proved that he could use it. He made the Senate work—fulfilling the role the Founding Fathers had envisioned for it—as it had not worked since the Republic's early days, in the decades between its founding and the Civil War, when the "Great Triumvirate," of Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and John C. Calhoun, worked out on the Senate floor the compromises that tried to hold the Union together. And among the areas in which he made the Senate work was civil rights.

Never had the chances of passing a civil-rights bill in the Senate seemed more remote than they did in 1957. For eighty-two years, every attempt to enact federal civil-rights legislation had been blocked in Congress, and most of these bills, especially the more significant, had been blocked in the Senate, where the power of what had come to be called the Southern Caucus—the congressional delegation from the eleven former Confederate states—was strongest. Seldom had the Southerners been in a stronger position than in 1957. Of the eight most powerful Senate standing committees, Southerners held the chairmanships of five; another chairmanship was held by a dependable ally of the South. And behind the immense power of the chairmen, the great senatorial barons, loomed always the threat of the filibuster. A Senate filibuster could be halted in only one way—by cloture—and in 1957 cloture could be imposed only by a vote of two-thirds of the Senate: sixty-four votes. (Sixty-four votes were required even if all the ninety-six senators were not present.) During the forty years since the use of cloture had been authorized, in 1917, civil-rights proponents had made eleven attempts to invoke it. Not one had succeeded. In 1956, in fact, not only had a civil-rights bill been crushed; it had been crushed by a margin greater than ever before. William S. White, the institution's most prominent chronicler, wrote in 1956 that the Senate was "the South's unending revenge upon the North for Gettysburg." When the Senate convened in 1957, no end to that revenge seemed

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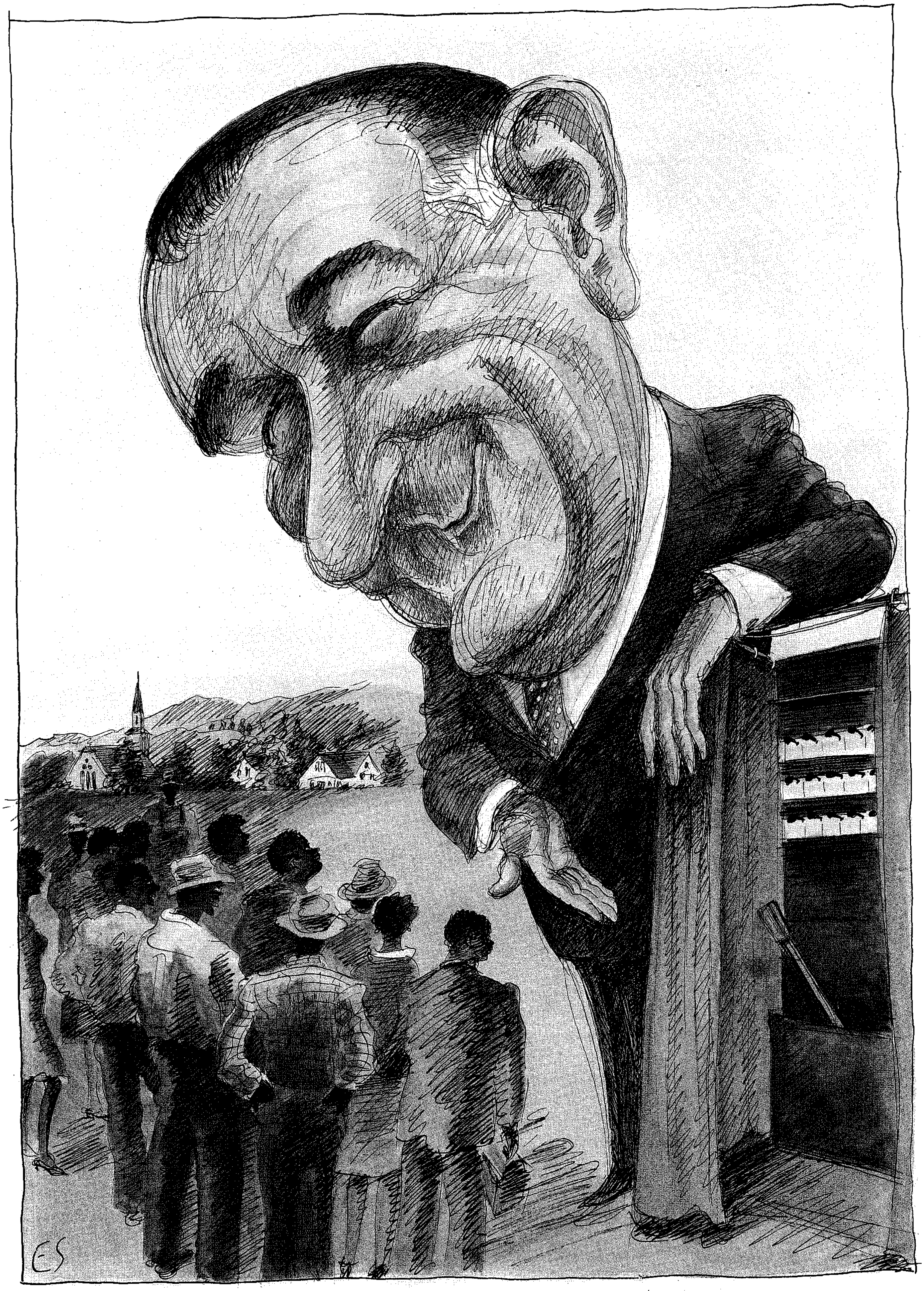
Johnson won his victories in part because of a deep sense of identification with the poor, including the poor whose skin was not white.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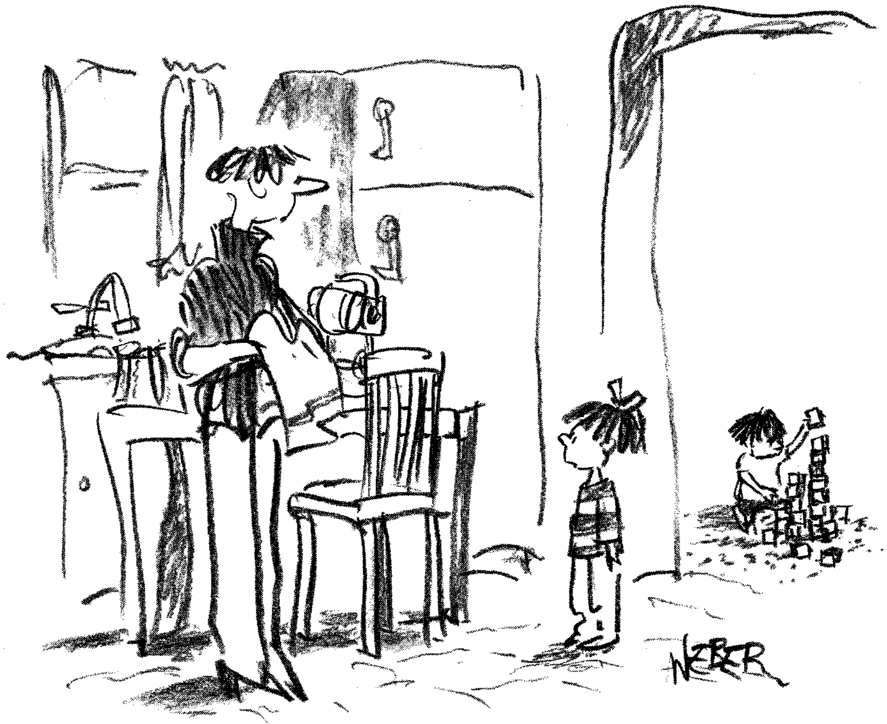


"Norman won't collaborate."

in sight. But in that year Lyndon Johnson would push a civil-rights bill through the Senate—would create the bill, really, so completely did he transform a confused and contradictory Eisenhower Administration measure that had no realistic chance of passage; would create it and then, in one of the most notable legislative feats in American history, would cajole and plead and threaten, would use all his power and all his guile, all the awe in which his colleagues held him, and all the fear, to ram the bill through the Senate. It was, thanks to him, a bill that the House could also pass, and that President Eisenhower could sign—the first civil-rights legislation to be added to the statute books of the United States since Reconstruction. The Civil Rights Act of 1957 made only a meagre advance toward social justice, compared with the advances made under President Lyndon Johnson's Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965. But it paved the way—its passage was necessary—for all that was to come.

Wanting to be remembered in history for his Presidency's great civil-rights legislation, Lyndon Johnson often declared that he had been free from racial prejudice his entire life. "I'm not prejudiced nor ever was," he told his biographer Doris Kearns Goodwin. "I never had any bigotry in me. My daddy wouldn't let me." Other writers took him at his word, and so did his assistants. In a typical comment from a Johnson aide—one of hundreds of similar comments from his aides—George Reedy said, "The man had less bigotry in him than anybody else I have ever met. . . . Johnson had none in him . . . not racial, ethnic, or religious prejudices."

Like everything else about Lyndon Johnson, however, the question of his prejudice wasn't so simple. At Georgetown dinner parties, he talked to men and women of liberal views, of tolerance toward human beings of other colors and persuasions, talked to them so passionately that they believed *he* was tolerant toward minorities, eager to help them, waiting only for the right moment; talked so passionately that in the nineteen-forties even the civil-rights pioneer Virginia Durr accepted his response to her reproaches about his long silence on civil rights (a comradely hug and an assurance that "Honey, you're dead right! I'm all for you, but we ain't got the votes. Let's wait till we get the votes"). But he talked quite another way in Suite 8-F of the Lamar Hotel, in Houston, the hideaway of the Texas contracting firm Brown & Root. The "8-F Crowd"—a group of reactionary Texas oil and contracting titans and their two most trusted attorneys, Alvin J. Wirtz and Edward A. Clark—met there for late-afternoon drinks. Some of the men Lyndon Johnson talked to there—Herman Brown, for instance, and Wirtz and Clark—were men of intolerance, men who felt that African-Americans and Mexican-Americans were inherently dumb, dirty, lazy, stupid, looking only for handouts ("gimmes," in the term that 8-F's presiding spirit, the Brown & Root founder Herman Brown, applied both to the New Deal programs he despised and to black Americans, who he felt always had their hands out for the programs' benefits). And Johnson talked to these men, too, so passionately that they believed he fully shared their feelings.

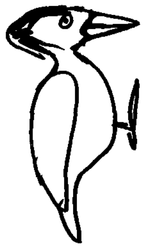
These men's beliefs about Johnson, their descriptions of the way he talked to them, were not made a part of the journalism of the time, or of the history that has been written about it, because these men, unlike the Georgetown liberals, were not friendly with (or, often, even polite to) journalists or historians. For more than twenty years after Herman Brown and his younger brother, George, had become legendary figures in Texas, they tried to avoid giving interviews. (George Brown's racial views were somewhat more moderate; he was the longtime chairman of the board of Houston's Rice Institute, and during the nineteen-sixties, becoming concerned about the drying up of federal and foundation funds for segregated institutions, he took the lead in desegregating Rice.) But their opinion of Johnson's attitudes was just as strong as the liberals' opinion; and what they felt was that, while Johnson had to be diplomatic and not express these attitudes publicly, they were the same as their own. And although their names are not as well known to history as those of the Washington liberals, they were just as close to Johnson: Herman and George were the major financiers of his rise, Wirtz and Clark his principal political strategists in Texas. Wirtz was called "the only man Johnson listened to." Clark, the Browns' lawyer and lobbyist, a behind-the-scenes figure so powerful in Austin that he was known as "the Secret Boss of Texas," was Johnson's lawyer, too; having "bought a ticket" on him in 1937, he became his principal attorney after Wirtz's death, in 1951, and kept Texas in line for Johnson for the remaining seventeen years of his career. When Johnson left Washington at the end of each congressional session, it was to the watering holes of these men—Brown & Root's hunting camps at Falfurrias and Fort Clark; the oilman Sid Richardson's twenty-one-mile-long private island in the Gulf of Mexico—that he repaired, for the week-long whiskey-soaked hunting trips that played a crucial role in his political career.

His rise was financed and planned by men so bigoted that to talk to them when their guard was down was to encounter a racism of almost stunning viciousness. I happened to visit Clark in his Austin apartment one day when he was seething over the fact that the name of his street, formerly Nineteenth Street, had been changed to Martin Luther King Boulevard, and as soon as I walked in he told a "joke": "Did you hear about how the Reverend King went to Africa to look for his roots, but as he were climbing the tree a baboon shat in his face?" During an earlier interview, I had asked Clark if Johnson's views about blacks and Mexican-Americans were any different from his own. Smiling a slow, amused smile, he replied in his East Texas twang, "If there were any difference at all, it were not apparent to me." Once, when Virginia Durr was advocating giving African-Americans the vote, Wirtz told her flatly, "Look, I like mules, but you don't bring mules into the parlor." According to George Brown, "Basically, Lyndon was more conservative, more practical than people understand. You get right down to the nut-cutting, he was practical. He was for the niggers, he was for labor, he was for the little boys, but by God . . . he was as practical as anyone."

To take Lyndon Johnson at his word—his word that "I never had any bigotry in me"—it is necessary to ignore other words of Johnson's: words written, in his handwriting, in a private diary that he kept during the month he spent in the Pacific during the Second World War. To take him at his word, it is necessary to ignore still other words, preserved on a tape recording made not in the Oval Office but in 1967 and 1968 over a radio telephone, when Johnson talked to employees on his ranch unaware that an Associated Press photographer, Steve Stibbens, had found himself, by accident, listening to the conversations, and had decided to record them, because, as Stibbens recalled, "I was so shocked—I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I mean, this was the great civil-rights President."

Crossing the Pacific in May, 1942, the big four-engine Coronado flying boat on which Johnson was travelling put down for refuelling at small islands, and Johnson observed the islanders' behavior. On May 18th, on the island of Nouméa, New Caledonia, he wrote in his diary, in a neat, cramped script, "Natives very much like Negroes. Work only enough to eat." After he reached Australia, he was at an airbase in Brisbane on June 4th when a violent incident involving black servicemen occurred. "Negro problem—no hard liquor as order Lieutenant," Johnson wrote in the diary. "Negroes and constables knife threat." His aide John Connally, with whom Johnson subsequently discussed the incident, explained years later that it reinforced Johnson's belief that Negroes had a predilection toward drunkenness and violence. The tape made in 1968, a quarter of a century later, shows that Johnson subscribed to some of the stereotypes about Mexican-Americans, too. Complaining to Dale Malechek, his ranch foreman, about the laziness of Mexican-American workers on his ranch, he told Malechek and his white assistants to "watch those Mexicans . . . because I don't believe they do much when you all are not with them. I wish you'd keep one white man with them."

A firm hand was necessary with Mexicans, Johnson felt. "I know these Latin Americans," he told the journalist Tom Wicker in 1964. "I grew up with Mexicans. They'll come right into your yard and take it over if you let them. And the next day they'll be right up on your porch, barefoot and weighing one hundred and thirty pounds, and they'll take that, too. But if you say to 'em right at the start, 'Hold on, just wait a minute,' they'll know they're dealing with somebody who'll stand up. And after that you can get along fine."



To accept Johnson's contention that "I'm not prejudiced nor ever was," it is necessary to ignore notes taken by reporters on statements he made in off-the-record conversations—statements that never made their way into print but are available in the Lyndon Johnson Library. In a conversation with a correspondent for *Time* on January 22, 1968, Johnson explained why he didn't want to dispatch gunboats to protect vessels like the U.S.S. Pueblo. "If we started sending gunboats out to protect everybody gathering information we'd have a budget of five hundred billion dollars every year," he said. "That harassment is part of the job. It is just like you driving home at night and you come up to a stoplight, and there's some nigger there bumping you and scraping you."

To accept Johnson's contention, it is necessary to ignore certain phrases in his early speeches which revealed his attitude toward Asians. During the late nineteen-forties, his public rhetoric (like the rhetoric of many columnists and editorial writers of the day) was filled with references to "the menace of Eurasia." America must not surrender to "godless men in Eurasia," he said during a speech in 1948. "Without superior airpower America is a bound and throttled giant; impotent and easy prey to any yellow dwarf with a pocketknife," he said during another speech the same year. These were prepared addresses; his off-the-cuff speeches were not recorded, but people who followed his campaigns say the speeches were filled with references to "yellow dwarves," "hordes of barbaric yellow dwarves," "sneaky yellow dwarves," and "godless yellow dwarves."

His remarks about black Americans and Mexican-Americans before he was President were not isolated remarks. In conversations with friends, Johnson constantly employed the caricature shorthand for people of color—that they were not intelligent, that they were lazy, that they were prone to drunkenness and violence—to make points, as when, to show, as one man put it, "that he had no particular respect" for Lady Bird's opinion, he said, "I have a nigger maid, and I talk my problems over with her, too." On other occasions, he said, "I talk my problems over with my nigger chauffeur, too."

So Johnson was not without prejudice. Like millions of other Americans, he held stereotypes, and sometimes the stereotypes were expressed in racial terms. When, moreover, Johnson was speaking to an African-American, he often used racial pejoratives. If blacks were sufficiently subservient to him, he was kind and rather gentle with them, and used these words in a somewhat friendly manner. One afternoon in the mid-nineteen-thirties, during Johnson's tenure as Texas director of the National Youth Administration, an old friend, State Senator Welly K. Hopkins, was talking with him in his N.Y.A. office in Austin when a black employee came in. Hopkins later told an interviewer for an oral history for the Johnson Library that Johnson asked the man what he wanted. "He said, 'Boy, what do you want?' Well, he said he wanted to borrow five dollars. 'Well, what do you want it for, boy?' " Hopkins said, "I could tell the President was going to let him have it"—and after the employee said he needed it so that he could get married Johnson gave him the money.

But sometimes those terms were not used in a friendly way. Johnson possessed not only a lash for a tongue but a rare talent for aiming the lash, for finding a person's most sensitive point, the rawest of his wounds, and striking it, over and over again, without mercy. With a black American, of course, the rawest point was likely to be the darkness of his skin, and the names by which he was addressed because of it: "nigger," for example, or "boy." And when Johnson wanted to hurt a black man that was often where he aimed the lash. When I asked Hopkins if Johnson always used the word "boy" in a joking or paternalistic way, Hopkins shook his head to say no, and related an incident that occurred in the N.Y.A. office on another occasion when he was visiting Johnson. A building employee—a middle-aged black man, "a porter or something, I think"—had done something that angered Johnson. "My God, I will never forget how he talked to that man," Hopkins said. "He would just rip him up and down, and the man would just have to stand there and take it. Lyndon would just keep calling him 'boy,' 'boy.' 'You understand that, *boy*? You got it now, *boy*? Do this, *boy*. Do that, *boy*.' "

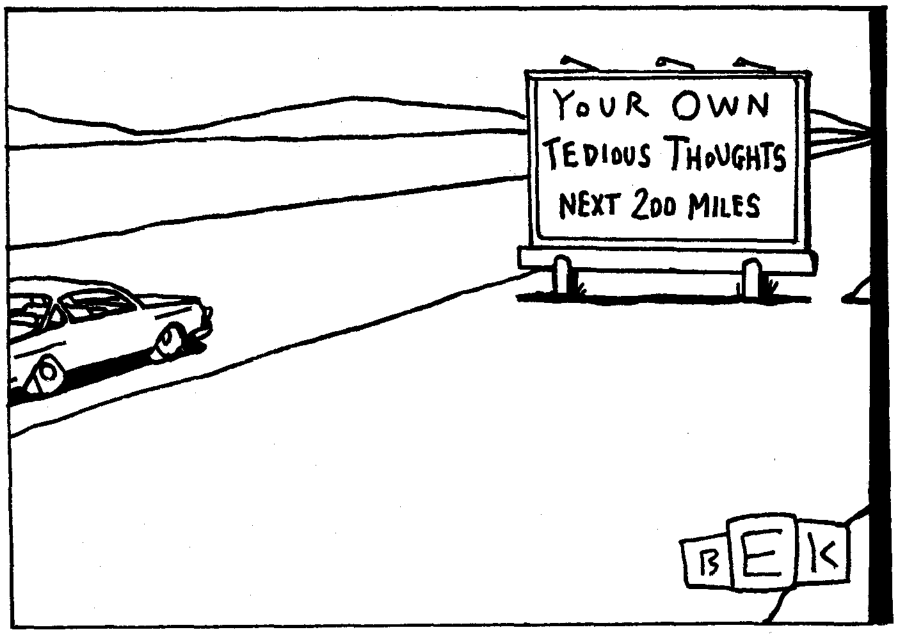
Racial stereotypes sometimes governed Johnson's actions as well as his words. A stereotype that had currency in the Hill Country was that all blacks were terrified of snakes. Sometimes Johnson or one of his Hill Country friends would catch a snake, sometimes a harmless snake, sometimes a rattlesnake. Johnson would put it in the trunk of his car and drive to a gas station at which a black man was working as the pump attendant. Pulling up to the pump, he would tell the attendant that he thought the spare tire in his trunk might need air and ask him to take a look at it. Often, this practical joke was successful; telling Ed Clark about one incident, he said, of a black attendant, "Boy, you should have seen that big buck jump!" He went on playing this joke not only when he was in college but when he was a congressman. Once, in 1945 or 1946, at a service station at the corner of First Street and Congress Avenue in Austin, the joke had a different dénouement, according to the station's manager, who witnessed the incident, and two other men. While Johnson was "standing there laughing" at the attendant's shock, the black man picked up a tire iron and threatened to wrap it around Johnson's neck. Another employee had to hustle the congressman out a back door to get him away.

But there was a difference between Lyndon Johnson and all the other Americans who held racial stereotypes—and between Lyndon Johnson and all the Presidents, save only Lincoln, who came before him and who came after him. It was Johnson who, a century after Lincoln freed black Americans from slavery, gave those Americans (and, indeed, most Americans of color) the rights that America supposedly guaranteed its citizens—but that, until 1964 and 1965, millions of Americans did not enjoy.

Lyndon Johnson was able to win his civil-rights victories in part because of where he came from.

Texas was in the South—one of the eleven Confederate states—but in a crucial respect the Texas Hill Country wasn't Southern. Because rainfall sufficient to grow cotton petered out just before its eastern edge, little cotton was grown on that vast highland and very few African-Americans lived there—none at all in Johnson City. "There were no 'darkies' or plantations in the arid Hill Country where I grew up," Johnson was to recall. "I never sat on my parents' or grandparents' knees listening to nostalgic tales of the antebellum South." This was not to say that the Hill Country wasn't part of the South in other respects. "In Stonewall and Johnson City I never was a part of the Old Confederacy," he was to say. "But I was part of Texas. . . . And Texas is a part of the South. . . . That Southern heritage meant a great deal to me."

Southern racial attitudes existed in the Hill Country—the word "nigger" was in common use—but, with few blacks to focus on, or to pose a threat, the attitudes were more casual than in the rest of the South; the atmosphere in which Johnson



was raised was not steeped in racism, and neither was he. He never exhibited, in word or deed, the visceral revulsion that Southern racists like the Mississippi senators Theodore Bilbo and James Eastland displayed at the very thought of blacks and whites mingling in social situations or at work, or at the thought of them having sexual intercourse or of racial intermarriage; never exhibited the conviction of a Richard Russell, the senator from Georgia, that "mongrelization" would lead to the end of civilization.

Johnson's use of words like "nigger" and "boy" to hurt or intimidate was primarily an example of the way the lash that was his tongue sought out the most vulnerable spot in everyone, not just blacks: in using those words, Johnson was guilty less of racism than of generic cruelty. At least once, in fact, dealing with an African-American employee, he used these epithets in a different way, in order to teach the employee the lesson that Johnson felt everyone had to learn, a lesson that he felt would lead to an improvement in the employee's life: that it was necessary to accept reality, to face harsh facts and push beyond them, to be pragmatic, which in the employee's case meant to accept that he would always be the target of these epithets, would always be the target of prejudice, and that he had to accept that fact, because only by accepting it could he move beyond prejudice and achieve his ambitions.

The employee, a native of Magnolia, Texas, named Robert Parker, was indeed ambitious. During the nineteen-sixties, he would become maître d' of the Senate Dining Room. During the forties and fifties, he was one of Johnson's "patronage" employees, holding down a Johnson-arranged job as a District of Columbia postman while earning his patronage by serving without pay as a bartender and waiter at Johnson's parties and, on occasion, filling in as his chauffeur when Johnson's regular driver had a day off.

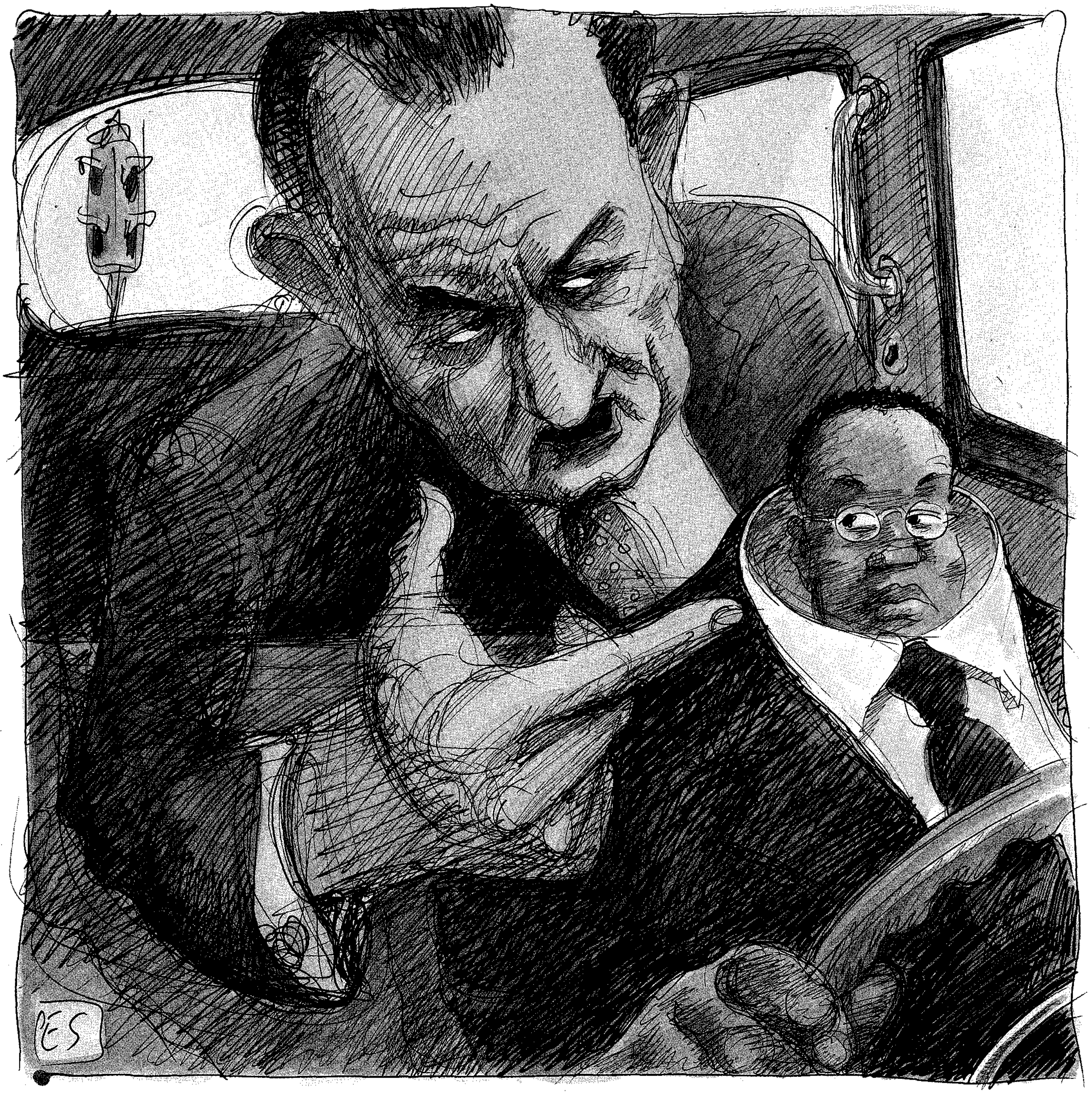
"Yet for years," Parker wrote in his autobiography, "Capitol Hill in Black and White," Johnson "called me 'boy,' 'nigger,' or 'chief,' never by my name." Parker felt there were political reasons that could explain Johnson's use of these terms in public. "He especially liked to call me nigger in front of southerners and racists like Richard Russell," he wrote. "It was . . . LBJ's way of being one of the boys," and once, when "we were alone," Johnson "softened a bit" and said, "I can't be too easy with you. I don't want to be called a nigger-lover." But Johnson also used those terms in private. "Whenever I was late, no matter what the reason, Johnson called me a lazy, good-for-nothing nigger," Parker wrote.

One morning while Parker was driving him to the Capitol, Johnson, who had been reading a newspaper in the back seat, "suddenly . . . lowered the newspaper and leaned forward," and said, " 'Chief, does it bother you when people don't call you by name?' " Parker recalled that "I answered cautiously but honestly, 'Well, sir, I do wonder. My name *is* Robert Parker.' " And that was evidently not an answer acceptable to Johnson. "Johnson slammed the paper onto the seat as if he were slapping my face. He leaned close to my ear. 'Let me tell you one thing, nigger,' he shouted. 'As long as you are black, and you're gonna be black till the day you die, no one's gonna call you by your goddamn name. So no matter what you are called, nigger, you just let it roll off your back like water, and you'll make it. Just pretend you're a goddamn piece of furniture."

Parker found that incident in Johnson's car difficult to explain—or forgive. Years later, as he stood beside Lyndon Johnson's grave thinking of all Johnson had done for his people, Parker would say he was "swirling with mixed emotions." Lyndon Johnson, he would write, had pushed through Congress "the most important civil rights laws this country has ever seen or dreamed possible." Because of those laws, Parker would write, he felt, at last, like a free man. "I owed that freedom to him. . . . I loved the Lyndon Johnson who made them possible." But remembering the scene in the car—and many other scenes—Parker was to write that on the whole working for Johnson was "a painful experience. Although I was grateful to him for getting me a job . . . I was afraid of him because of the pain and humiliation he could inflict at a moment's notice.

"I thought I had learned to fight my bitterness and anger one day at a time," he wrote. "But Johnson made it hard to keep the waves of bitterness inside. . . . But I had to swallow or quit. If I quit, how would I support my family? I chose survival and learned to swallow with a smile." And, Parker wrote, "I hated *that* Lyndon Johnson." The words Johnson shouted

WHILE YOU WERE OUT



Robert Parker, one of L.B.J.'s "patronage" employees, later wrote that "Johnson made it hard to keep the waves of bitterness inside."

from the back seat in the car that day—"No one's gonna call you by your goddamn name"—those words, Parker wrote, "stuck in my belly like a fishhook for thirty years until I almost believed them." Yet that lesson Parker learned—that he had "to swallow" in order to get ahead—was taught to him unforgettably by the man who shouted in his ear, "Let it roll off your back like water."

Lyndon Johnson was able to win these victories in part because of empathy—a deep sense of identification with the poor, including the dark-skinned poor. He understood their thoughts and emotions as if they were his own. And this was not surprising, for in a way they *were* his own. His empathy was deeply rooted in his personal experience, in blisters and sunburn and windburn and humiliation. This empathy was also a product of the place he came from. Because there were so few blacks or Mexicans in the Hill Country, and no money in that impoverished land to import blacks or Mexicans to work the crops, when one of the few farmers who grew cotton needed it chopped or picked "there wasn't any Mexicans or niggers to do it, and everybody, the kids included, went out to do it," one of Johnson's boyhood friends was to recall. And one of the kids doing this work they called "nigger work" was young Lyndon Johnson.

Cotton, the Texas novelist and essayist William Humphrey was to write, "is a man-killing crop." Chopping it, thinning out the rows by hacking out every other plant with a hoe, is hard, and when picking time comes the pickers strap on kneepads and hang long burlap sacks around their necks, and all day long, from before daybreak until dark, under that broiling Hill Country sun, they stoop and crawl along the cotton rows, dragging after them the sacks that grow heavier and heavier as they are filled with the cotton bolls. "After just one day of this work," Humphrey writes, even a young man, even a boy, had trouble straightening his back at night, and "even your work-hardened hands are raw and bleeding from the sharp-pointed hulls." Lyndon Johnson's hands never became hardened; his soft white skin refused to callus but only blistered, one blister forming on top of another. Nonetheless, at the age of nine and ten, Johnson was doing this work, out in the stony Hill Country cotton fields on his hands and knees, dragging the sack behind him. His older cousin Ava, who often worked beside him, remembers him whispering to her, "Boy, there's got to be a better way to make a living than this. There's got to be a better way."

When he was seventeen or eighteen, Johnson worked on a Texas State Highway Department "road gang," gravel-topping stretches of the road between Johnson City and Austin. The workers on most such road gangs were blacks or Mexicans; the work was brutally hard and the pay was only two dollars a day. This particular gang was all white, but the work it was doing was nonetheless "nigger work." At times, Johnson was half of a pick-and-shovel team, working with brawny Ben Crider. "He'd use the shovel and scoop the dirt up"—that hard Hill Country limestone caliche—"and I'd use the pick[axe] and pick it up, or vice versa," Ben recalled, and he added that the work was "too heavy" for the skinny, ungainly teen-ager. At other times, Lyndon drove a "fresno," a heavy, two-handled iron scoop pulled by two mules. Driving a fresno meant standing behind the scoop, between its handles, with a hand on each handle. Since the driver didn't have a hand free, the reins were tied together and wrapped around his back, so that he and the mules were, really, in harness together. Lyndon would have to lift the handles of the heavy scoop, jam its front edge into the ground, and push, forcing the scoop through the rocky soil, as the mules pulled. When the scoop was filled with earth and stones, he would have to press down on the handles, straining with the effort, until the scoop rose off the ground. Then, still pressing on the handles as hard as he could, the reins cutting into his back, he would have to drive the mules to a spot where he could dump the heavy load. "This, for a boy of . . . seventeen, was backbreaking labor," Crider says.

Lyndon Johnson worked on that road gang for almost a year. All his life, he would hate the very thought of physical labor, and he never forgot what cotton picking and road-gang work—"nigger work"—were like. Harry McPherson, who joined Johnson's staff in 1956, commented in his memoir, "A Political Education," that his boss "did not pretend, as many Southerners did, that Negroes 'really enjoyed' the southern way of life," and that he didn't "romanticize" that life, including the menial work that was part of it. How could Johnson have romanticized that work? He had done it.

Lyndon Johnson's empathy for the poor and the dark-skinned came not from experience alone but also from insight. It was rare insight, provided by his ability to read people so deeply, to see so truly what they were feeling that he could feel it himself.

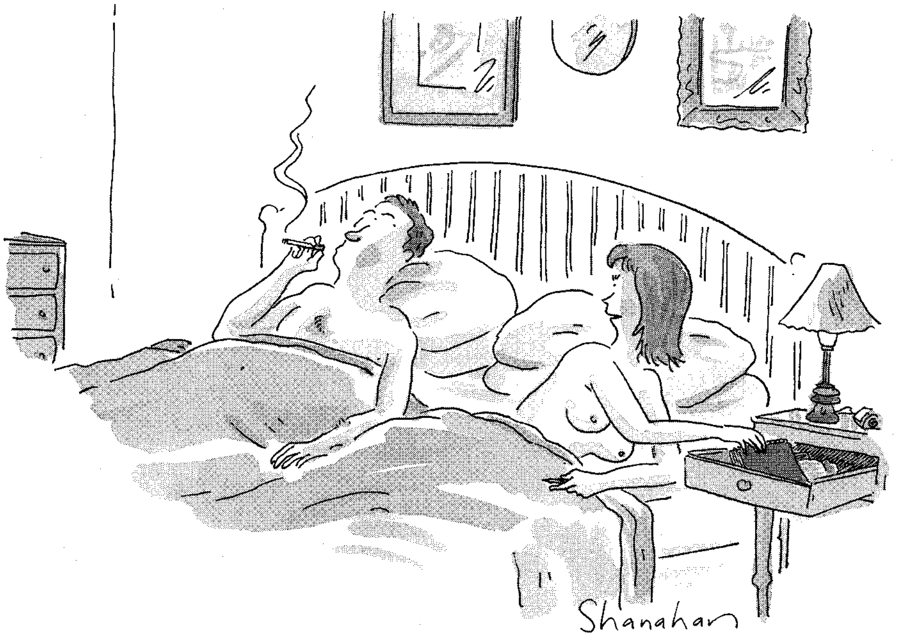
During the first twenty years of his life, he had little contact with people of color, but he spent his twenty-first year—from September, 1928, through June, 1929—teaching them, at the "Mexican school" in the little town of Cotulla, on the flat, barren plains of the South Texas brush country.

When "lunch hour" came, he saw that the children had nothing to eat, and were hungry. He went to visit their homes—on the "wrong" side of the tracks of the Missouri-Pacific Railroad which divided Cotulla into Anglo and Mexican sections—and saw the tiny, unpainted, tin-roofed, crumbling hovels, with neither electricity nor running water, in which they lived. He learned that his pupils' fathers were being paid slave wages by Anglo farmers.

And he saw more. "I saw hunger in their eyes and pain in their bodies," Lyndon Johnson would say years later. "Those little brown bodies had so little and needed so much." He saw hunger and pain—and he saw more. "I could never forget seeing the disappointment in their eyes and seeing the quizzical expression on their faces. . . . All the time they seemed to be asking me, 'Why don't people like me? Why do they hate me because I am brown?' " And his own heart went out to them. Out of the insight came indignation—Cotulla's Anglos treated the Mexicans "just worse than you'd treat a dog," he was to say, and he was snarling as he said it. After the cotton fields, after the road gang, after Cotulla, there was present amid the violently contrasting and clashing elements of Johnson's personality one element that was as vivid and as deep as the cruelty, no matter how opposite it might be: an understanding of and a sympathy for the poor, particularly for the poor whose skin was dark; a tenderness for them, a compassion for the very people to whom at other times he could be so callous. Understanding the conditions of the children's lives, he understood the impact of those conditions. Even his most diligent students were often absent, and he knew why; all his life, he would recall lying in his room before daylight and hearing truck motors and knowing that the trucks were "hauling the kids off . . . to a beet patch or a cotton patch in the middle of the school year, and give them only two or three months' schooling."

And, because he understood that, the prejudices he had against Mexican-Americans, as with the prejudices he held against black Americans, while he expressed them in racial terms, were stereotypes less of race than of culture and class. His view of the characteristics that he thought he saw in blacks and Mexican-Americans—laziness and a predisposition to violence, for example—was very different from the view of Southern racists. Johnson did not feel that these characteristics were due to some innate, ineradicable defects in their genes expressed in the color of their skin. He believed that they were a product of the lack of education and opportunity with which America had shackled them, and that if that situation was changed they would be changed, that if people of color were freed from these shackles they would, in every way, be fundamentally the same as people whose skin was white. He often expressed this belief, sometimes with his customary coarseness. In 1964, he told a Texas friend, Walker Stone, "I'm gonna try to teach these Nigras that don't know anything how to work for themselves instead of just breedin'; I'm gonna try to teach these Mexicans who can't talk English to learn it so they can work for themselves . . . and get off of our taxpayers' back." The racists in 8-F were wrong about Lyndon Johnson, as wrong as the Southern racists whose support he needed on Capitol Hill.

The clearest proof of the genuineness



"Mind if I journal?"

• •

of his feeling that the stereotypical view of minorities would be changed if the circumstances of their lives were changed was how hard he tried, as a twenty-one-year-old schoolteacher, to change the circumstances of his Mexican-American students. He had taken the teaching job only as a means of earning enough money to finish college, but he became a teacher such as Cotulla had never seen, not only arguing the school board into providing equipment so that his pupils could play games during recess but arranging for games with other schools—baseball games and track meets, such as the white kids had—and, since the board declined to pay for buses to transport his kids to the meets, climbing the hovels' rickety porches to persuade men to whom every day's work was precious to take off from work and drive the children in their cars.

"He used to tell us this country was so free that anyone could become President who was willing to work hard enough," one of his students recalled. He told them a story—"the little baby in the cradle," as a student would call it. "He would tell us that one day we might say the baby would be a teacher. Maybe the next day we'd say the baby would be a doctor. And one day we might say the baby—any baby—might grow up to be the President of the United States." Johnson's passion was not limited by the job. Telling the school janitor, Thomas Coronado, that he should learn English, he bought Coronado a textbook to learn it from; before school opened and after it closed, Johnson sat on the steps outside the school, tutoring him. "After I had learned the letters, I would spell a word in English. Johnson would then pronounce it, and I would repeat." The tutoring, Johnson emphasized, must not interfere with Coronado's responsibilities. "He made it very clear to me that he wanted the school building to be clean at all times. . . . He seemed to have a passion to see that everything was done that should be done—and that it was done right."

The circumstances of the children's lives interfered with everything he was trying to do for them, and he saw that, saw that their lives were permeated with injustice.

"I swore then and there," Johnson was to say, "that if I ever had a chance to help those underprivileged kids I was going to do it." It was at Cotulla, Johnson was to say, that his dream began of an America "where race, religion, language and color didn't count against you."

And Johnson won these victories for America's downtrodden because he possessed not only the quality of compassion but also a rare gift for translating compassion into the only kind of action that would be meaningful.

That gift first became apparent in Johnson's first government job—as a twenty-four-year-old assistant to a do-nothing Texas congressman from a district on the Gulf of Mexico, even farther south than Cotulla. At a time when no one could think of a way to save from imminent foreclosure the district's hundreds of Depression-wracked farms, which were so far behind in their tax and mortgage payments that they seemed hopelessly beyond the reach of the newly elected President Roosevelt, Johnson thought of a unique and complex refinancing plan and persuaded banks, mortgage companies, and two federal agencies to implement it quickly enough so that the farms were saved, sometimes only hours before the foreclosure sale began. And the gift came to flower in Johnson's first elective office, when, as a twenty-eight-year-old congressman, he brought electricity to thousands of lonely farms and ranches in the Hill Country—an achievement against seemingly impossible odds, which displayed not only a remarkable determination to mobilize the powers of government to help the downtrodden but a remarkable ingenuity in expanding and using those powers, in transmuting sympathy into action: governmental action.

Lyndon Johnson was not to become the champion of the poor, particularly the poor of color, solely because of his compassion or his governmental genius, however. Indeed, another question to which the answer is not so simple is whether his accomplishments on their behalf would ever have become reality if they had depended solely on those traits.

Compassion was not the only powerful force in his life. His feverish, frantic intensity was fuelled also by ambition. It was not the desire to "help somebody" but the desire to "be somebody"—that is the motivation mentioned most prominently by the companions of his youth ("If he couldn't lead, he didn't care much about playing," Ben Crider recalled) and of his more mature years as well. His ambition was, in fact, for the highest position of all. In a statement that encapsulates the feelings of a score of his intimates in Washington, his ally James H. Rowe, Jr., said, "From the day he got here, he wanted to be President." Sometimes the two forces—compassion and ambition—

ran on parallel paths, but sometimes they didn't. And what might happen when they didn't, when compassion and ambition collided, was demonstrated by an incident that occurred exactly one week after Johnson had been sworn in as the junior senator from Texas, in January, 1949.

In June, 1945, on Luzon Island, in the Philippines, Private Felix Longoria, a twenty-six-year-old Mexican-American truck driver from a small South Texas town called Three Rivers, volunteered for a patrol and was killed in a fusillade of Japanese bullets, leaving a wife, Beatrice, and a young daughter. He was buried in a temporary military cemetery on Luzon. Three years later, in December, 1948, his body was shipped home. When the Army notified his widow, who had moved to Corpus Christi, she said that she wanted the body brought to Three Rivers for the funeral and burial, and on Friday, January 7, 1949, she took a bus back there to arrange for her husband to be buried in his home town. When, however, she arrived at Three Rivers' only funeral parlor, the Rice Funeral Home, the owner, T. W. Kennedy, Jr., told her that she could not use its chapel for the service, because "the whites won't like it."

Once, Beatrice Longoria might have simply accepted that edict. Before Pearl Harbor, Mexican-Americans in South Texas had generally accepted discrimination meekly, but during the war Mexican-American soldiers had served not in segregated units, as blacks had, but alongside white soldiers (the number of Mexican-Americans who saw combat was higher in proportion to their population than any other ethnic group), and they had returned home in a different frame of mind. In 1948, several hundred Mexican-American veterans in Corpus Christi had formed the American G.I. Forum to make sure they received the medical and educational benefits to which they were entitled under the G.I. Bill. When Mrs. Longoria got back to Corpus Christi, she contacted the forum's president, a physician and former Army major named Hector Garcia. Dr. Garcia telephoned Kennedy, and told him that Mrs. Longoria wanted to use his funeral home. Kennedy repeated his refusal, at first simply giving the same explanation—"The white people just don't like it"—but when Garcia had the temerity to persist, saying "But in this case the boy is a veteran, doesn't that make any difference?" Kennedy lost his temper and furnished additional reasons. "That doesn't make any difference," he said. "You know how the Latin people get drunk and lay around all the time. The last time we let them use the chapel, they got all drunk and we just can't control them. . . . I'm sure you'll understand."

Dr. Garcia understood. On January 10th, he sent seventeen telegrams to military officials, congressmen, and senators, including one to Lyndon Johnson, who had been sworn in as the state's junior senator seven days earlier. Garcia asked for "immediate investigation and correction" of Kennedy's "un-American action," which was "in direct contradiction of those same principles for which this American soldier made the supreme sacrifice in giving his life for his country and for the same people who now deny him the last funeral rites."

The telegram was delivered to Johnson's suite in the Senate Office Building at eight-forty-nine the next morning, and was opened by one of his aides, either John Connally or Walter Jenkins (neither could later remember which). When Johnson arrived at the office, about an hour later, it was shown to him—and there was hardly a moment's pause before his response. "By God," he said, "we'll bury him in Arlington!" He told someone to get him the official in charge of Arlington National Cemetery and determined that indeed Private Longoria was eligible for burial there: any soldier, sailor, or marine who died in active service or held an honorable discharge could be buried in that burial place of America's heroes, with full military honors—three volleys from a firing squad, a bugler blowing "Taps," four uniformed flag-bearers holding the American flag over the casket as it was lowered into the grave, and then the presenta-

YOU'RE COVERED. TEE OFF. OVER.
P. Steiner

THE NEW GOLF

tion, by a soldier of the same rank as the dead serviceman, or higher, of the flag to the next of kin, the soldier saluting and saying, "The government presents to you this flag under which he served."

Johnson called in his staff, and he was clearly in the grip of his emotions. "You all get on the phone," he said, and his staff ran to obey, and within a few minutes of reading the telegram—"immediately, really," Connally recalled—"not only I but Walter was on the phone arranging things." "Johnson's immediate reaction was he"—Longoria—"was eligible to be buried in Arlington," Connally said. "This was an instinctive thing—his instinctive sense of fairness and his basic feelings. . . . It had to do with outrage. Here was a veteran who had died for his country and he can't get buried in his home town." And no one could have translated that outrage into action more effectively. The decision to have the burial in Arlington was so *right*, so perfectly suited to correct an injustice. A veteran's home town had refused to bury him with the ordinary honors that any soldier who died for his country deserved; so Johnson had arranged for the veteran to be buried with full honors, in a place of deep symbolic significance. And his telegram back to Dr. Garcia, sent that afternoon after a call to make sure that Garcia's account was accurate, was so right. "I deeply regret to learn that the prejudice of some individuals extends even beyond this life," Lyndon Johnson's telegram said. "I have no authority over civilian funeral homes, nor does the federal government." However, he said, that did not mean that he, or Beatrice Longoria, was without recourse—glorious recourse. "I have today made arrangements to have Felix Longoria reburied with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery here at Washington where the honored dead of our nation's wars rest." Or, he told Garcia, should the widow desire to have her husband's body buried nearer his home, "He can be reburied at Fort Sam Houston National Military Cemetery at San Antonio." Just tell him what was desired, Johnson telegraphed. It would be done. "If his widow desires to have him reburied in either cemetery, she should send me a . . . telegram." And Johnson knew, because he knew the Mexican immigrants of South Texas, that the widow might be very poor. She should send her telegram collect, he said. And, he added, whichever cemetery she selected, she should not worry about the cost. "There will be no cost."

TO ZBIGNIEW HERBERT'S BICYCLE

Since he never
really possessed you
however he may have longed to
in secret

so that in dreams he knew
each surface and detail of you
gleam of spokes and chrome
smells of grease and rubber
the chain's black knuckles

day by day you
remained out of sight
so that he never had to
lock you up or hide you
because nobody could see you

and though he never
in fact learned how to ride you
keeping his round
toppling weight upright
on the two small toes
of water slipping
out from under

once he was well away
hands on the grips feet off the ground
you could take him
anywhere

at last like the rain
through the rain

invisible as you were

—*W. S. Merwin*

And there were still other sentences in Johnson's telegram. "This injustice and prejudice is deplorable," he said. "I am happy to have a part in seeing that this Texas hero is laid to rest with the honor and dignity his service deserves." After reading the telegram over one last time to make sure it accurately expressed his sentiments, he told Connally to send it out—at once.

Dr. Garcia had called an emergency rally of the G.I. Forum in a Corpus Christi elementary school for that evening, and when he walked out on the stage, before an audience of more than a thousand people, he was holding Johnson's telegram, and he read it to the audience, and, as he did, men and women began to stand up and cheer, some of them with their fists in the air, and the whole audience cheered when Garcia announced that Beatrice Longoria had selected Arlington as her husband's resting place. She herself replied to Johnson by telegram. It was addressed to "Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, House of the Senate, Washington, D.C." "Humbly grateful for your kindness in my hour of humiliation and suffering," the telegram said. "Forever grateful for your kindness." And when, the next day, Walter Jenkins drafted a reply—"in view of your desire . . . have completed necessary arrangements"—Johnson was dissatisfied with the formality of its tone, which extended to its closing sentence, a typical sentence from his form letter to constituents saying that he was pleased to help. He sat there staring at Jenkins's draft for a long minute, and then crossed out that sentence and wrote in his own hand another sentence, which hinted at the depth to which his heart had been enlisted in the widow's cause. Instead of saying merely that he was pleased to help, the telegram now said that he was *proud* to help. "I am proud to be of assistance," Johnson wrote.

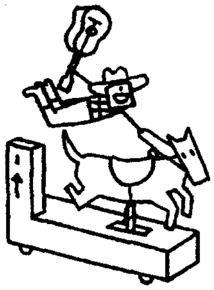
Johnson called in the journalist William S. White, and on January 13th the story was on the front page of the New York *Times*, under the headline "G.I. OF MEXICAN ORIGIN, DENIED RITES IN TEXAS, TO BE BURIED IN ARLINGTON," and with a quote from Johnson. "I am sorry about the funeral home at Three Rivers," he had told White. "But there is, after all, a fine national funeral home, though of a rather different sort, out at Arlington." He telephoned Walter Winchell in New York. "The state of Texas, which looms so large on the map, looks mighty small tonight," Winchell told his national radio audience. Newspapers across Latin America and the United States picked up the story—"U.S. TO BURY MEXICAN G.I., SPURNED BY TEXAS HOME," the headlines said; "G.I. DENIED REBURIAL IN TEXAS TO GET FULL ARLINGTON HONORS"—and even newspapers in Texas: not in South Texas, perhaps, but in the rest of the state. "A ringing blow for friendly Latin-American relations, downright Democracy, and plain ordinary humanity was struck by Texas' Junior Senator," the Sherman *Democrat* editorialized. "Felix Longoria will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery, that haven where America pays its highest respect for its outstanding battle heroes." "A WRONG IS RIGHTED" was the headline in the Denison *Press*. From New York City came a wire from a Veterans of Foreign Wars post saying that its members would consider it an honor and a privilege if the post's chaplain could officiate at Private Longoria's reburial. And, if a note of pure grace were needed to this explosion of feeling, it was provided by a letter that Johnson wrote to Beatrice Longoria on January 13th, because he felt that, as he wrote her:

> It was impossible for me to express to you in my telegram yesterday the deep sympathy I feel for you in this hour. I am honored to have some small share in making possible your husband's reburial in Arlington National Cemetery, where many of our most honored heroes lie buried. I know your heart would be warmed if you could read and hear the many, many kind and thoughtful expressions of unselfish sympathy which have come to my office today. . . . We want to be helpful to you in every way possible. . . . My only desire is to be helpful, whenever and however you call upon me. Your wishes will guide me in all that I do, and I will be glad to do all that I possibly can.

Describing Johnson's feelings during the first days of the Longoria incident, John Connally said years later, "His reaction was outrage, true outrage. . . . It was outrage over injustice, it was instinctive, it was real—it was from his heart."

And then, as Connally was also to recall, "We began to backtrack."

Although Connally and Jenkins felt that Johnson's reaction to Hector Garcia's telegram was not calculation but outrage, the two aides were not blind to the political advantages of his decision to help Beatrice Longoria. Mexican-American veterans who had returned from Europe and the Pacific were becoming politically active in South Texas, and Johnson's decision placed him firmly on their side. In that sense, Jenkins was to say, the decision "helped him immeasurably. I think they felt like they had a friend maybe for the first time that would champion at least a small cause." In fact, Mexican-American leaders like Dr. Garcia felt that they might have found a champion for causes that were not small. A United States senator had stood up for them against discrimination; might not that senator help them pass the laws they needed so badly? A champion gave them someone to rally behind. Members of the American G.I. Forum "were inspired, energized," Julie Leininger Pycior, author of "LBJ & Mexican Americans: The Paradox of Power" and an associate professor of history at Manhattan College, recounts. "For the first time a Texas senator had treated them as full-fledged constituents. . . . Messages, money, and letters of support poured into the Forum headquarters. . . . From all over Texas Mexican Americans were inundating their new senator with thanks and advice." In the Senator's office, recalled John Connally, "The phones were ringing off the wall."



The first significant sign of trouble came on the morning of Friday, January 14th, the fourth day of the drama. The United Press reporter Warren Duffee called and asked Johnson's aide Horace Busby if Senator Johnson would care to comment on statements just released by T. W. Kennedy, the Three Rivers undertaker, and S. F. Ramsey, of the First State Bank, president of the town's Chamber of Commerce, denying that racial factors had been involved in the matter of Longoria's burial. Kennedy said, "I did not at any time refuse to bury him or allow use of the chapel" but "I did discourage it"—not "because he was Latin American" but solely because "of friction that I heard existed between members of the family." He said, "I thought I was avoiding any trouble at the funeral home by asking Mrs. Longoria to use her house." He had written Mrs. Longoria to say, "If there was a misunderstanding on my part, my apologies are extended. If you still want use of our funeral chapel and want us to conduct services, we will be only too glad to be able to be of service." Ramsey accused Johnson of having exploited the "misunderstanding" for political reasons. "It is our feeling that he capitalized on this to further his own standing with the Latin-American population." Three Rivers, Ramsey said, was a town notably free of racial discrimination. "You'll find no town anywhere in South Texas that has enjoyed better relations between Latin-Americans and whites." (That was probably true.) "Three Rivers is ashamed of the publicity, which is not deserved," he said.

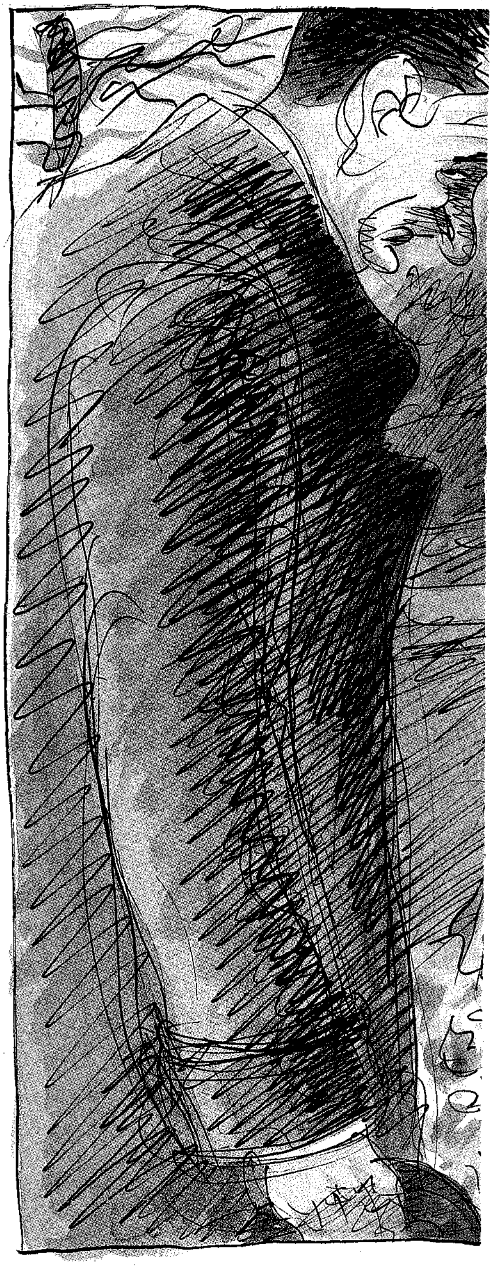
In a memo, Busby advised Johnson not to comment, saying, "Any answer might cause the public to question just what your motives really were, and it would be less than dignified to enter a quarrel now," and for the moment that was the stance that Johnson adopted. But that afternoon, at the monthly meeting of the steering committee of the Washington chapter of the "Texas Exes," the University of Texas alumni association, in the suite of the lobbyist Dale Miller at the Mayflower Hotel, a heated argument broke out over the Longoria incident, and Miller said, "It's too bad that one man down in Three Rivers could bring on an international incident. It's even worse, though, that some of the men in Congress would try to capitalize on it for their own political position."

Connally put a typed report of the argument on Johnson's desk, with the notation "Senator, this is interesting." Johnson understood at once the seriousness of the report. Dale Miller was the son of Roy Miller, Texas's preëminent lobbyist, who for twenty years had been the Washington representative of the Texas Gulf Sulphur Corporation, of an impressive array of oil and natural-gas companies, and of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. Dale Miller had succeeded to his father's mantle, as well as his father's sprawling Mayflower suite. He was the very heart of the conservative Texas establishment. He had, moreover, consistently been among Johnson's staunchest supporters, persuading other conservatives to support him, telling them that if they knew Lyndon as well as he did they would be convinced that Johnson was "no wild-eyed liberal," that he "gave the impression of being much, much more liberal than he actually was." At least part of Miller's conviction was based on the belief that Lyndon was as "practical" on racial matters as he and his father, racists to the core, were. Dale Miller's reaction to Johnson's involvement in the Longoria affair was an indication of what the response of the Texas conservative establishment was likely to be.

The political factors in Johnson's calculations began to change. As Frank C. (Posh) Oltorf, a canny young liberal legislator who was shortly to become a participant in the unfolding drama, puts it, Johnson now saw that "if he pursued" his original course in the Longoria affair, at the end "he would have gained a lot of new friends but would have lost a lot of old ones," whom he could ill afford to lose.

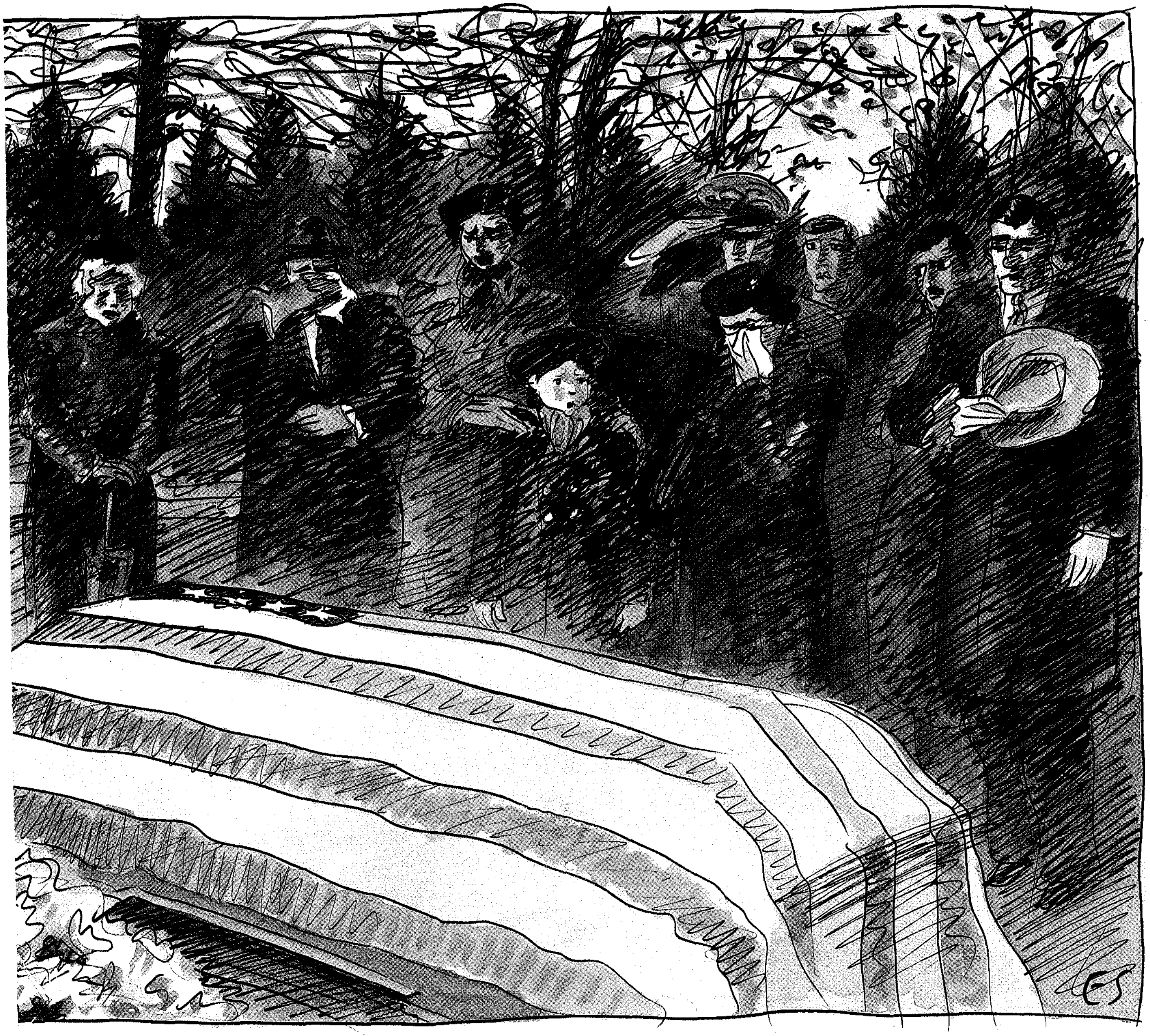
These old friends were the Anglo rulers of the impoverished, largely illiterate Mexican-American counties of the Rio Grande Valley, which forms the border between Texas and Mexico, and of the counties that stretch north from the Valley to San Antonio. Thousands of Johnson's votes in both his 1941 and 1948 Senate campaigns had come from those South Texas counties, in margins as high as a hundred to one, but those huge pluralities had little to do with the preferences of the Mexican-Americans. The overwhelming majority of their votes had been cast at the orders of the Anglo border dictators called *patrones* or *jefes*, orders often enforced by armed *pistoleros* who herded Mexican-Americans to the polls, told them how to vote, and then accompanied them into the voting cubbyholes to make sure the instructions were followed—if, indeed, the votes had actually been "cast" at all. In some of the Mexican-American areas, the local border dictators, in Texas political parlance, didn't "vote 'em" but, rather, just "counted 'em." In those areas, most of the voters didn't even go to the polls: the *jefes'* men would, as one *patrón's* attorney put it, simply "go around to the Mexicans' homes. Get the numbers of their [poll tax] receipts. Tell them not to go to the polls. Just write in a hundred numbers, and cast the hundred votes yourself." Or, after the polls closed, they would simply take the tally sheets and add to the recorded total whatever number was needed to give their favored candidate the margin he desired. "You get down on the border, and it didn't matter how people"—the Mexican-Americans—"felt," Ed Clark would explain. "The leaders did it all. They could vote 'em or count 'em, either one." It was not the Mexican-Americans of South Texas, then, but, rather, their Anglo *patrones* who had given Johnson the votes he needed to get to the Senate, and whose votes he would need again to be reëlected.

As for the "new friends" he might make—the returning Mexican-American veterans—their movement was still in its infancy and confined to cities like Corpus Christi; there were no chapters of the G.I. Forum in 100–1 Duval or the other border counties. And, since the returning veterans would not use the *patrones'* methods, they would never be able to deliver a bloc vote of such huge dimensions. It was the South Texas Anglo leaders whose support would still be crucial to Johnson. And subsequent developments made clear the extent to which his actions in the Longoria case had antagonized those leaders. The next day—Saturday, January 15th—the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce intensified its attack, in two telegrams to Johnson. "We deplore your itchy trigger finger decision and action without first investigating the Longoria case," the first said. The second deplored "your hasty action without first investigating true facts from reliable sources."



When he learned that Private Felix Longo

The "facts" to which the telegram referred were actually the rumors of "friction" within the Longoria family; and the Anglo leaders of Three Rivers, in their attempt to lend them credence, revealed the depths to which they would sink. According to the rumors, sometime



d been turned away by a funeral chapel in his home town of Three Rivers, Texas, Johnson said, "By God, we'll bury him in Arlington!"

after Felix Longoria was killed Beatrice had dated another man, and Felix's family had been infuriated by this. Now Ramsey, together with the mayor of Three Rivers, J. K. Montgomery, and the city secretary, Bryan Boyd, went to the home of Felix's father, Guadalupe Longoria, a sixty-six-year-old man seriously ill with heart disease who did not speak English well, took him down to Ramsey's bank, and began firing questions at him in English, some of which he had a hard time understanding. Then they put in front of him a typed statement, which they asked him to sign. The statement said that "Felix's wife would not speak to me because I objected to the association she was having with another man," that she "did not want us"—the rest of the family—"to know when the body would arrive," and that he and the rest of the family did not want Felix buried in Arlington but, rather, in Three Rivers. "My family and I hope that our Three Rivers friends will help us in getting his body brought here for burial." At the bottom of the statement was a blank line for Guadalupe Longoria's signature. A notary public was sitting outside Ramsey's office, waiting to witness it.

The line remained blank, however: although the interview went on a long time, Guadalupe Longoria refused to sign; an article by Stanford P. Dyer and Merrell A. Knighten was to say that "his grief was not less than his daughter-in-law's, but neither was his honor, and he would have no part of this thing." That evening, the same three men came to Guadalupe's home, bringing with them the statement. He still wouldn't sign it. Guadalupe would later dictate—and sign, along with two of Felix's brothers and one sister—a different statement:

> I wish to state that, contrary to reports published in some newspapers, my son's widow, Beatrice Longoria, and I have never had any personal differences. She, members of her family, and all members of my family including myself have always been on the best of terms. . . . To this day, my son's widow visits my home frequently and we still consider her, as we always will, as our own daughter.

He and Beatrice had agreed to accept

the offer "from Senator Lyndon Johnson . . . to bury my son's body in Arlington," Longoria's statement said. And, even if he had disagreed with her, Guadalupe Longoria said, he would have bowed to her wishes; "the widow . . . after all, had the final say in all these matters, and properly so."

"If any embarrassment has been caused by this case to anyone, I am sorry," Guadalupe Longoria added. "But after all I did not create a feeling of prejudice which seems to exist in many places in Texas. . . . I think that we would only be fooling ourselves to try to leave the impression that people of Mexican descent are treated the same as anyone else [in] Texas."

Guadalupe Longoria's refusal to sign their statement did not deter Three Rivers' leaders, however. They gave it to the newspapers as if he *had* signed it. "Lupe Longoria, Sr. still wants" his son buried in Three Rivers, according to Mayor Montgomery, the Corpus Christi *Caller-Times* reported. " 'If it were in my power, I still would have my son buried in Three Rivers,' Longoria told the Mayor." The undertaker, T. W. Kennedy, repeated the rumors for publication; in the January 20th issue of the Three Rivers *News*, he said, "There is considerable evidence to the effect that there has been trouble between the wife of Felix Longoria and the rest of the family, including his parents. . . . I did not want trouble in the funeral chapel."

The Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce continued to deplore "the stigma of this publicity" that it said Johnson had caused, and a Live Oak County state representative, J. F. Gray, a key figure in the loose alliance of South Texas Anglo leaders, accused him, in John Connally's words, of "pulling a grandstand play to try and embarrass somebody." (Gray "was bitter as hell—mean bitter," John Connally recalled.) Anglo anger spread beyond Live Oak's borders. "Dear Lyndon," wrote William F. Chesnutt, a longtime Johnson loyalist from the town of Kenedy, in adjoining Karnes County:

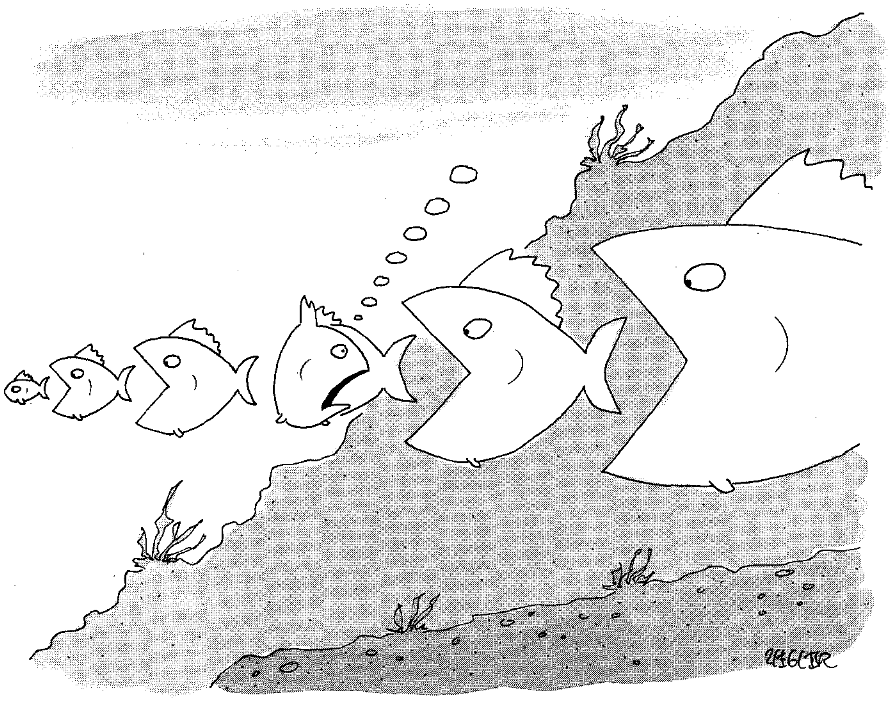
> I don't mean to be telling you what you should or should not do, but I would like to let you know what people are saying about you. . . . In the first place, there was a big misunderstanding of the whole thing. The funeral parlor at Three Rivers is rather small and the undertaker thought it would be better to hold the funeral services in the local Catholic Church. He had no sooner suggested this when right away, some hot-headed Latin-American jumped to his feet and hollered "PREDJUDICE" [sic]. Now that is the whole truth of the matter. . . . I have heard several comments on "Why doesn't Johnson keep his nose out of this affair" . . . and still others which run mostly in the vein of "I voted for him once but I'll be damned if I'll do it again."

"You look good, Al, in a midlife-crisis-y sort of way."

In San Antonio, the American Legion's Bexar County Central Council passed a resolution condemning "careless and immature actions by people in high and honorable places," which had caused "harmful humiliation and embarrassment" to "the good people of the City of Three Rivers and the State of Texas by bringing nation wide publicity." Its own investigation, the council said, had "not found the least trace of any act of Un-American activities or racial discrimination practiced in this matter." The state's most influential newspaper, the right-wing Dallas *Morning News*, weighed in with "There is good comradeship [in Three Rivers]. The two groups of citizens mingle freely and do business with one another with no apparent thought of difference in race origin."

The story, John Connally said, became "bigger than any of us had anticipated . . . became a real furor." After making rounds of telephone calls, both he and Ed Clark, in Austin, reported to Johnson that anger against him was intensifying among South Texas leaders. Posh Oltorf recalled that Johnson and Connally "were concerned with keeping this from becoming a big issue where all the Anglos would turn against Johnson and the Mexican-Americans." But the calls coming in to Room 231, Johnson's Senate office, showed that that was exactly what was happening. "There were forces at work beyond our control," Connally said. "By this time, we wanted to engage in damage control as far as

South Texas was concerned." Which is why, he said, "We began to backtrack."



"If you ask me, we're all the problem."

The backtracking began on the point that had most infuriated Three Rivers and many Texans: the fact that the case had received national attention because of the decision to bury Longoria at Arlington instead of in his home town, or at least in his home state. This decision had been regarded as a particular "stigma" by the town, which blamed Johnson for it, pointing out, accurately, that before he made the suggestion no one else had thought of it. "An Open Letter to Senator Johnson," in the Three Rivers *News*, said, "Previous to your action, not one word had been said in Three Rivers as to where this American soldier would be buried, other than the Longoria family lot in the Three Rivers Cemetery . . . in his own native town. . . . Therefore, Senator, you can very easily understand why the citizens of Three Rivers were so stunned when over the radio and in the papers came reports that you had made arrangements to have Felix buried in Arlington Cemetery." R. E. Smith, the chairman of the Texas Good Neighbor Commission, the state agency responsible for improving relations with Mexico, implored Dr. Garcia to intercede with Beatrice Longoria and persuade her to change her mind and allow her husband's body to be "brought back to Texas for reburial at Three Rivers, or at least in Texas." If she did so, Smith assured her, "the Governor will do everything possible to show her that he approves of this action." He urged Dr. Garcia to "bear in mind that the reputation of Texas will be at stake in history's recording of our handling of this very delicate matter."

Once, during the first few days after he had received Dr. Garcia's telegram, Lyndon Johnson had wanted his role in the decision to bury Felix Longoria at Arlington to be as prominent as possible. He had telephoned Bill White and Walter Winchell. Once, he had been "honored to have some small share in making possible your husband's reburial in Arlington." In the form letters with which he replied to letters praising him for his role, he had been "Honored to have this share in securing Felix Longoria the last rites befitting a hero"; "proud" that "I was able to make arrangements."

Now that tone changed. On January 16th, Johnson tried to disclaim responsibility for the publicity. Telephoning Dr. Garcia, he asked the physician to remind reporters that it was he, not Johnson, who had released the telegrams. (Garcia, who had considerable political savvy, understood and agreed, coöperating with Johnson's wishes by not mentioning that Johnson had given him permission to release them. After a call from Garcia, the Corpus Christi *Caller-Times* reported that Johnson "did not release the telegram to the press himself. The release was made by Garcia.") While Johnson's staff continued to send out the "honored" and "proud" replies to congratulatory letters, a series of new replies was drafted, to be used in response to angry letters from Texas, and successive drafts revealed Johnson's growing desire to distance himself as much as possible from the national publicity and the Arlington burial decision. In a letter of January 26th, addressed to a constituent in Three Rivers, but intended as a general form letter for Texas constituents, Johnson tried to claim that he had played only a "small part . . . in the Longoria case."

"I did not release the story here, the entire publicity originated in Texas," he wrote—a statement that was, at best, disingenuous, given his initiation of the contacts with William S. White and Walter Winchell, which had generated the national publicity. "I had no control over it," he added. And, he said, I "had no desire to have any connection with the affair except to see that an American soldier was given a decent burial under honorable conditions"—which, he said, had not necessarily meant Arlington. "I sent a telegram advising the body of Felix Longoria could be buried" in either Arlington or Fort Sam Houston. "I made no recommendation of where the body should be buried." By January 29th, in a telegram to Mayor Montgomery, of Three Rivers, Johnson was suggesting that in fact Arlington had been only one of many possibilities he had raised: "My only connection with Longoria matter has been to inform constituents that they had privilege of reburial of soldier's body in any military cemetery, including Fort Sam Houston and Arlington."

Lyndon Johnson's desire to avoid, as far as possible, any further publicity in connection with the Longoria affair was demonstrated by his actions when the Longorias arrived in Washington.

It might have been expected that when the family—Felix Longoria's widow, his eight-year-old daughter, and his mother, brothers, sister, and sister-in-law (his father, whose heart condition had worsened, in the opinion of his family, because of the pressure from the Three Rivers leaders, was too ill to make the trip)—arrived for the funeral on February 15th, the day before it was held, the senator who had, with so much fanfare, planned that funeral would have invited the Longorias to visit his office to have their picture taken with him. No such invitation was extended. Instead, John Connally, Horace Busby, and Warren Woodward met the Longorias at the train station, drove them around Washington on a sightseeing trip (which did not include the Senate Office Building), and dropped them at their hotel, where they stayed until the funeral.

At the funeral, Johnson's actions were striking—for a politician known among journalists for the pithy and dramatic statements he generally had ready for them, and for the way he invariably thrust himself into the center of photographs. When John Connally was asked years later about the funeral, he said, "I don't recall if he went to the funeral. My guess is he didn't go." Connally's guess was inaccurate. Johnson was present when Felix Longoria's body was laid to rest, along with the bodies of eighteen other servicemen killed in action, at Arlington on Wednesday, February 16th. But it is easy to understand Connally's mistake.

A number of dignitaries attended the service, because of the attention that had been focussed on it. President Truman sent his military aide, Major General Harry H. Vaughan, who arrived early and had a statement ready when reporters approached him. He was there, he said, "because of the stupidity of that undertaker." The First Secretary of the Mexican Embassy arrived carrying a large wreath, and there were representatives of the State Department.

Johnson did not have a statement for reporters. No quote of any kind from him has been found in any of the newspaper articles about the funeral that appeared the following day. He did not arrive early, and after the ceremony he quickly shook hands with the family and left.

Returning to his office from Arlington, Johnson immediately wrote Dr. Garcia to urge him not to keep the matter alive. After commenting on the "impressive ceremony" and complimenting the Longoria family—who, he said, "seem to be exceptionally fine people"—he added, "As I told you, I have not sought and do not seek any personal attention for my small role in this. I hope there will be no further reason for this to linger in the newspapers or instigate unnecessary contention."

This hope was to prove fruitless. By a 104–20 vote, the conservative Texas House of Representatives, at the urging of the furious J. F. Gray and some of his fellow South Texas legislators, passed a resolution establishing a five-member committee to investigate "the truth or untruth of the allegations" of racial discrimination by Kennedy's funeral home.

Further "damage control" was therefore undertaken. Gray and his allies expected the Texas House Speaker, Durwood Manford, a rock-ribbed conservative, to name only conservatives to the committee, which would presumably exonerate Kennedy, finding that his refusal had been based only on the Longorias' "family troubles," and thereby clear Three Rivers' good name. And this fiction might well have been perpetrated—had not Manford been firmly under the thumb of two of Johnson's key backers, Herman Brown and Ed Clark. When Manford announced the names of the committee members, only four were conservatives. The fifth was the young liberal Posh Oltorf, who would eventually become Brown & Root's Washington lobbyist. "Without Clark, there wouldn't have been a single liberal member on it," Oltorf was to say. Oltorf understood his assignment: to keep Johnson's name as inconspicuous as possible throughout the committee hearings. Each evening during the hearings, which were held that March in Three Rivers, he telephoned Johnson's office in Washington to report on the day's developments to either Johnson or Connally, and when Johnson picked up the phone, Oltorf recalled, "he would ask, 'Did they bring up anything about me?' " Oltorf understood Johnson's concern, and knew there was reason for it. The South Texas Anglo leaders would have liked to "punish" Johnson, to show that he had "meddled when he had no business to meddle," he said. Johnson and Connally were afraid of a "complete whitewash" of the funeral home—"that the committee would find that there had been no discrimination, and it [the funeral] could all have been arranged quietly if Johnson hadn't interfered." But, the young legislator realized, the two men in Washington were more afraid

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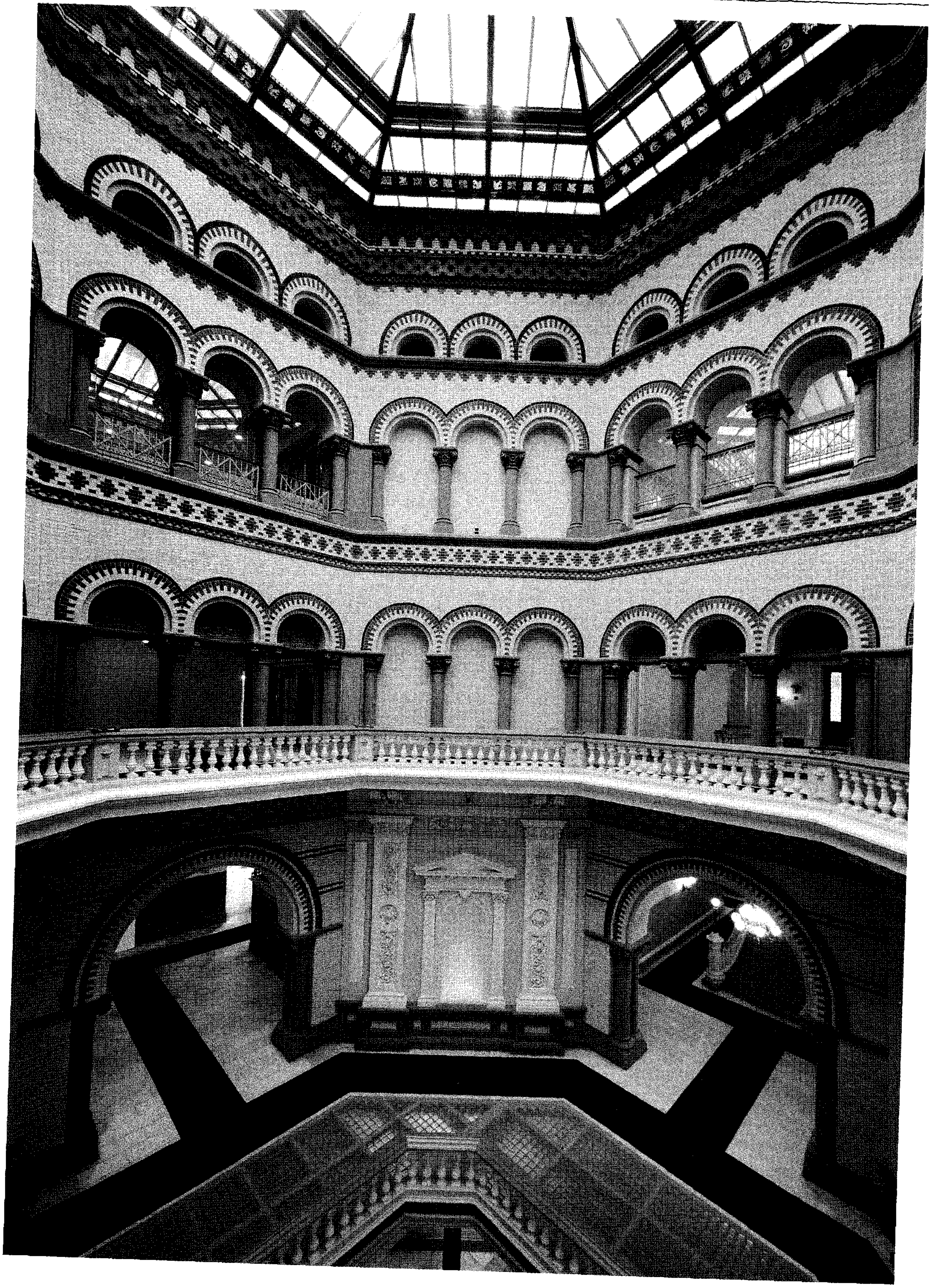
THE SKY LINE
BY ROBERT POLIDORI

THE PRIZE

What to do with the Tweed Courthouse, which sits just to the north of City Hall, is shaping up to be one of the most contentious issues concerning a New York City landmark in some time. The courthouse is a sumptuous Anglo-Italianate palazzo with more than two dozen magnificent courtrooms arranged around a five-story octagonal rotunda topped by a colored-glass skylight. By the time it was completed, in 1876, the builders were more than eleven million dollars over budget, owing largely to kickbacks orchestrated by William Marcy Tweed, the corrupt "boss" of Tammany Hall. Tweed may have cheated the taxpayers, but he gave them something for their money—one of the finest public buildings the city has ever had. It functioned as a courthouse until the early nineteen-seventies, and later was home to a series of municipal offices. By then, it was in bad shape. The majestic entry stairs on Chambers Street were gone, the roof leaked, and the skylight was covered over. The Giuliani administration spent nearly ninety million dollars restoring it, and then offered it to the Museum of the City of New York. Now Mayor Bloomberg says that he intends to make the courthouse the headquarters of the Board of Education, which he wants nearby so he can keep an eye on it. Running the schools out of a landmark in City Hall Park might be a nice piece of political symbolism, but it won't do much for the landmark. The open "bullpen" offices that the Mayor favors would have to be jammed awkwardly into the imposing rooms. The courthouse would make a better museum than, say, the old power plant in London that is now the Tate Modern, or the former train station in Paris that is now the Musée d'Orsay. But has anyone thought of using it as a courthouse again?

—*Paul Goldberger*



POPCORN
CHENEY

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of something else: that Johnson would be prominently labelled an ally of the Mexican-Americans and "all the [South Texas] Anglos would then turn against him." Johnson could have been vindicated on the "meddling" point by the truth—proof that Kennedy's motives had been racial. But, Oltorf realized, the Senator was less concerned that his role be vindicated than that it be minimized. "The thing they [Johnson and Connally] wanted was his name kept out," Oltorf said, in a recollection confirmed by Clark.

Oltorf's assignment was carried out successfully. In some ways, the hearings were blatantly stacked: the committee's four-member majority allowed Mayor Montgomery to testify that no discrimination against Latin Americans existed in any form in Three Rivers, and did not allow testimony that would have disproved the Mayor's contention. (Proof would have been convenient to hand. While the hearings were going on in the Three Rivers Rotary Club building, a Mexican-American veteran attempted to get a haircut in a barbershop next door. "We don't serve Latin Americans," the barber told him.) Thanks largely to Oltorf, however, testimony about the Longorias' alleged "family troubles" was, mercifully, kept to a minimum—as was the inclusion of Johnson's name. To every demand by a committee member that the "full story" of the Longoria incident be told, Oltorf would blandly reply that the committee had been authorized to look into only the initial "refusal or discouragement" of the use of Kennedy's funeral home. And "every time his [Johnson's] name was brought up, I would change the subject," Oltorf recalls. "I'd say, 'Well, that's not the issue.' " His job proved easier than he had expected, thanks to the power of the "Secret Boss of Texas." Oltorf says, "There were times when you could see one of the other [committee] members was ready to start a fight [with me]. But then, all of a sudden, they'd think better of it. He [Johnson] had Ed Clark behind him, and so I had Clark behind me, and, believe me, in the legislature no one ever wanted to cross Ed Clark—ever."

Assisting Oltorf in his assignment was the attorney Gus Garcia, a law-school friend of Connally's, whom Connally had enlisted to advise the Longorias during the hearings. Gus Garcia was an eloquent and flamboyant courtroom attorney, but eloquence was not what was required here, and Garcia understood that. At the close of the hearings, he wrote Johnson, "Your name was naturally bandied about a bit, but we managed to leave the correct interpretation in the record—namely, that you did nothing except follow Mrs. Longoria's instructions." As for the eloquent telegrams that Johnson had sent in those first moments of the Longoria affair, Gus Garcia was able to assure Johnson now that he and Oltorf had been able to keep them from being introduced in the hearings (because, as he explained in his letter, "Frank and I decided" that they "might be distorted by your political enemies").

The committee's majority drafted a report that was the expected whitewash. "There was no discrimination on the part of the undertaker at Three Rivers," the draft concluded. A liberal state senator, Rogers Kelley, later called the document "a slap in the face of the more than one million Latin-American citizens of the State of Texas." The report was signed, however, by only four of the five committee members. Declaring that "I . . . could not concur in their majority report without violating both my sense of justice and my intellectual honesty," Oltorf refused to sign it, and issued his own minority report, which was so persuasive that one of the four later asked to withdraw his signature, and the two dissents so undercut the majority report that, as Pycior put it, "in the end the committee found itself on the defensive," and the legislature took no action.

The Longoria affair was a turning point—"a catalyst," Richard Zelade wrote in *Texas Monthly* in 1986, "for the modern civil rights movement of Mexican Americans in Texas." Before the affair, Hector Garcia was to recall, the G.I. Forum "had nothing to do with civil rights. . . . It was strictly a veterans affairs" organization. By demonstrating so vividly how "prejudice and hatreds" poisoned "all aspects of our lives in the state of Texas," the affair broadened the Forum's focus to include all aspects of civil rights, and moved the organization into the political arena in which those rights could be secured. New chapters sprang into being; membership burgeoned. The furor over the burial of the Army private from Three Rivers galvanized the movement, and filled it with energy and purpose.

And it did so because of Lyndon Johnson. His gesture and words had taken a local incident, probably only one of a score of similar incidents that had gone unremarked outside the boundaries of the town involved, and had made it, as Zelade put it, "into one of those signal events that stir consciences" across an entire state.

The Longoria affair was not a turning point for Johnson, however. For a moment, it had seemed that it would be—a magnificent turning point. Prior to the morning on which Dr. Garcia's

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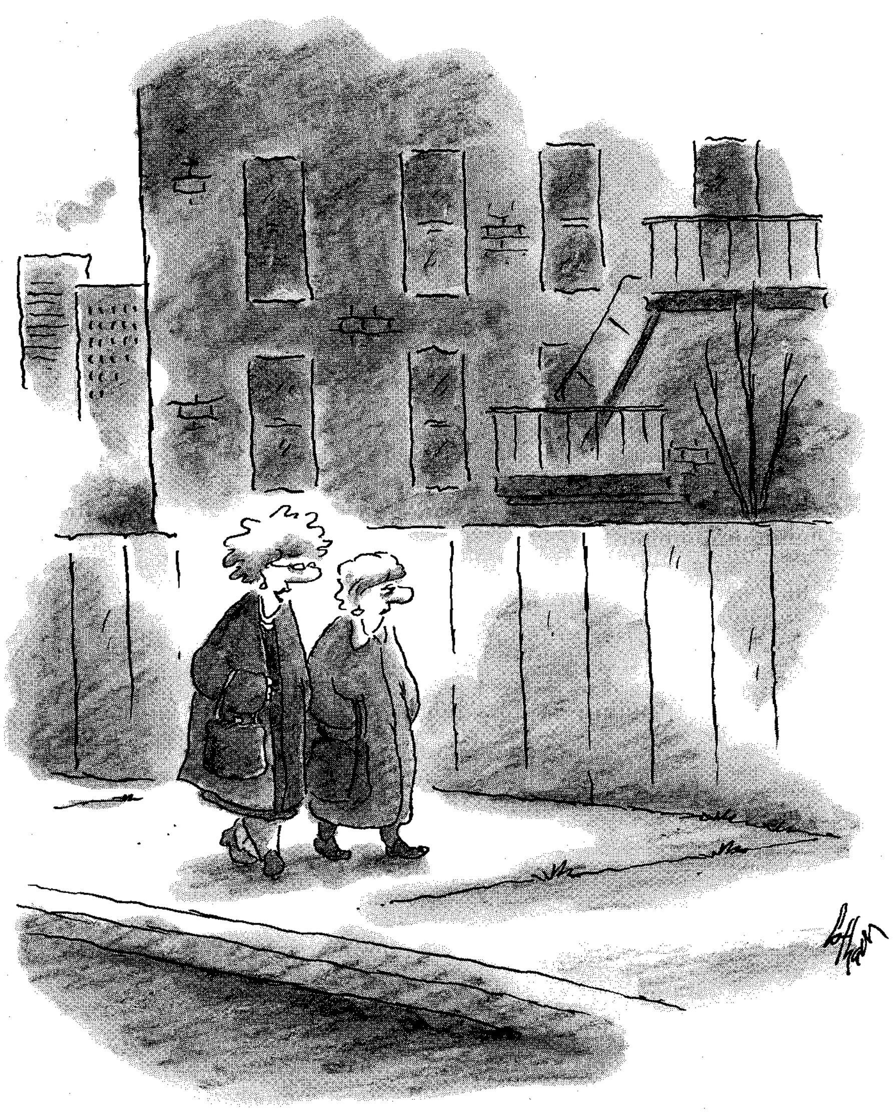
never believed in being a dead hero.

The damage control was effective. Although it didn't work with Representative Gray of Three Rivers, whose bitterness over the incident never abated—"He hated Johnson forever because of it," John Connally said—most of the Anglo border-county leaders remained Johnson's allies. Nor did Johnson's backtracking hurt him with the rank and file of South Texas's Mexican-Americans. The dexterity with which he had handled his retreat from the field—simply removing his name, and his presence, from the fight without any dramatic public statement—meant that most of the Mexican-Americans who had cheered his earlier, dramatic championing of the Longorias' cause were unaware that he had stopped doing so.

Johnson's silence was as nothing beside the gesture he had made in having their compatriot buried in Arlington. The Longoria episode was to have a permanent and prominent place in the Mexican-American consciousness; Felix Longoria would become, in a way, a martyr, and the senator who had arranged for the hero to be buried in a hero's grave became a hero himself. Teachers in South Texas's Mexican schools recounted the episode to their students. Accompanying Johnson on a 1953 swing through South Texas to shore up support for his 1954 reëlection campaign, Johnson's aide George Reedy would never forget the chant with which Mexican-Americans greeted his boss: "Olé Johnson, Olé Johnson! Tres Ríos, Tres Ríos, Tres Ríos!" As for the Mexican-

der, Johnson quickly began r Garcia to him. Following n of the legislature's investi- n agreed to address Garcia's nd the doctor was grateful: d our group, and of course it casion because at that time it ve any politician or certainly tor addressing this Mexican n there was an opening on der Patrol or for some other al job, Johnson began ask- recommend someone. And favors for Garcia, the little fa- ederal officeholder could do ituents—but that no office- een doing for South Texas's nericans. The veterans who backbone of the Mexican- ovement were entitled to veterans benefits; Johnson saw that they got them. And once the mother of a Corpus Christi boy in the Marine Corps came to Garcia's office, saying that her son was in a guardhouse at Camp Pendleton, in California, and that no one at the base would give her any information about him. "I'm going to pieces, doctor," she said. "All I want is to talk to my son and find out what is happening to him," she said. "Perhaps he is dead." Garcia called the base and got a major, who refused to give him any information, even after Garcia said, "You are doing a very cruel thing to this woman, because she is sick. A mother needs talking to her son."

"I got on the telephone, and I called Senator Johnson," Garcia recalls, "and in five minutes after he hung up this major was calling apologetically." Garcia was a very adroit politician—his G.I. Forum was to grow into an organization with chapters in twenty-six states—and he knew how much the fact that he could



"My son is a saint—he's always coöperating with the authorities."

produce such assistance helped him retain a position of leadership with his people. "These are the favors I do for people, through people like Johnson," he would say. "I'm the helpful go-between."

In later years, after the great civil-rights achievements of Johnson's Presidency, Hector Garcia would say that Johnson had consistently stood with the Mexican-Americans, but the records of the time show this to have been very far from the case. Each harvest season, tens of thousands of Mexican farmworkers crossed the Rio Grande into Texas to work on the huge South Texas farms owned by the powerful Anglo growers. Some were imported legally under the "bracero" program, through which wages and hours were established by harsh contracts (wage scales were often set at about thirty cents per hour) approved by the federal government. Others simply swam or waded across illegally, and hence were called "wetbacks." Legal or illegal, these Mexican immigrants were pitiable figures, working under the scorching South Texas sun for endless hours each day at "stoop labor," bent over the notorious "short hoe," and crammed at night into hovels without electricity or running water. They had come because they had no choice: there was no work for them in Mexico.

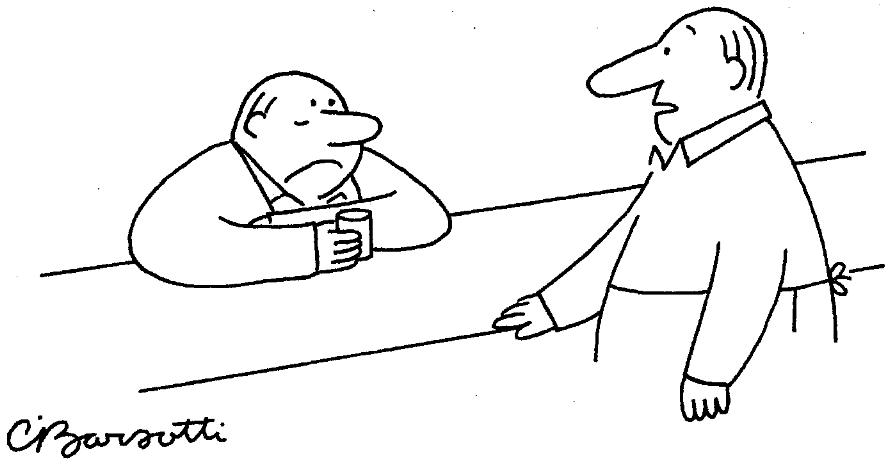
Once on those immense ranches—feudal domains, most of them—the migrant worker was, as the historian Frank Goodwyn puts it in "Lone-Star Land," "entirely at the mercy of his . . . employers. . . . He has no recourse to appeal, no bargaining power, no protection of any kind. . . . If he expresses dissatisfaction with the treatment he receives, his employer can merely expel him, whereupon he will be caught by the officers and taken back to face worse privation in Mexico." Some of the worst of the growers, in fact, expelled these migrants anyway; they would wait until the harvest was completed and then call the sheriffs or the border patrol, and report their workers as illegal aliens, who were then arrested and deported, without even collecting the few dollars they had earned. To the Mexican-Americans of South Texas, this exploitation made the bracero issue an overriding concern on humanitarian grounds; they called the bracero program "rent a slave." And it was overriding on economic grounds as well: in the opinion of most Mexican-American leaders, it was the willingness of these Mexicans to work the same jobs they were working, and accept such low wages, that kept their own wages low.

As Pycior relates, the unrestricted flow of migrant workers was held to be the principal reason that the rise of Mexican-Americans to the middle class was so much slower than that of the Irish or other immigrant groups. It was the single most important issue to Mexican-Americans in the nineteen-fifties. And throughout the nineteen-fifties Johnson supported not them but their opponents. They wanted the government to require that working conditions and wages in bracero contracts be equal to those prevailing in the United States and to cut off the flow of illegal immigrants, both by increasing appropriations to the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service and by increasing criminal penalties for growers who knowingly hired illegal aliens. "Something must be done and I believe that charging a heavy fine to those persons who insist in [sic] hiring wetbacks . . . will do it," one Mexican-American activist wrote Johnson. But the Anglo *patrones* wanted a surplus labor supply, and it was these *patrones* who controlled the votes that Johnson had needed, and might need again.

One of his first actions after becoming Democratic Whip, in 1951, was to muster Democratic support, crucial for its passage, for a bill renewing the bracero program, with its harsh contracts. As it was clearing conference, on June 29th, he wrote to a committee of thirty-three large growers, "Delighted to inform you that Senate and House conferees have agreed . . . on the Mexican labor bill." Once it was signed into law, J. C. Looney, one of the attorneys who represented the committee—and who had helped, as Pycior points out, "coördinate" Johnson's 1941 and 1948 Senate campaigns in the Rio Grande Valley—wrote Johnson to assure him that "the people in the Valley who are handling the situation and who are certainly influential . . . know what you are doing." They would express their gratitude, he told Johnson, but "without . . . publicity that might backfire."

In 1952, Johnson opposed legislation that would have increased criminal penalties for knowingly hiring illegal aliens. With the "wetback" problem growing worse, Mexican-American leaders pleaded with Johnson to support a four-million-dollar appropriation for an intensified campaign by the I.N.S. against illegal importation of workers. Because the proposal was defeated, they predicted, South Texas would be "flooded" with migrants, whose willingness to work endless hours for low wages would cause "suffering to native workers." Johnson led the opposition to the bill. This was too much even for the G.I. Forum, which passed a resolution noting that "whereas, Senator Johnson owes in large measure his position in the U.S. Senate to the vote of thousands of citizens of Mexican descent in South Texas [his] vote is in utter disregard of the friendship and high regard in which he has been held by [those] citizens."

Claiming that his vote had been due only to the lateness, and excessiveness, of the I.N.S.'s budget request, Johnson replied, "There is no group for which I



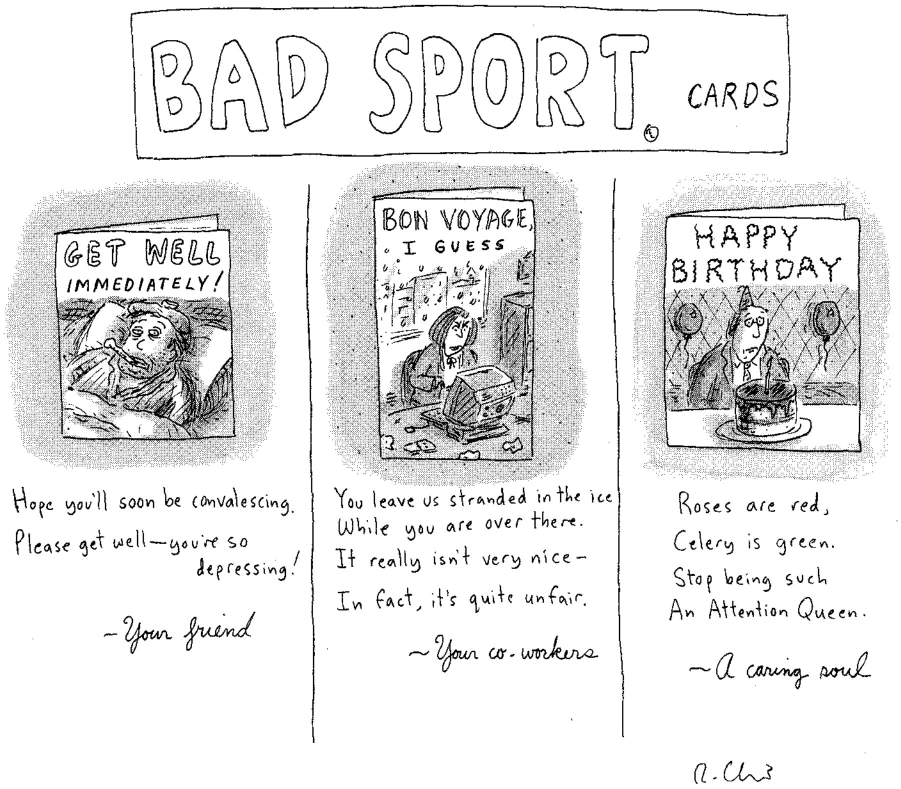
"You've got to be more specific, Ed. Wake you when what's over?"

have done more and to whom I feel more kindly than the Latin-Americans."

During his first seven years in the Senate—1949 through 1955—Johnson was willing to help the Mexican-Americans on any issue on which their interests did not conflict with the interests of the Anglos, but when the two groups were in conflict he almost invariably came down on the side of the whites. In 1954, for example, the Eisenhower Administration attempted to stop the illegal importation of "wetbacks"; Johnson opposed the program. On several other issues of major concern to the Mexican-Americans, Johnson was also on the growers' side. He kept the support of Hector Garcia and other leaders in part because he had convinced them that "his heart was all right," in part because of the patronage and prestige he gave them—and in part because of another factor, which both John Connally and Ed Clark were to sum up in the same words: "Where else were they going to go?"

After his victory in the 1954 Democratic primary, Johnson wrote Dr. Garcia, whom he called his "special friend," "Believe me, I am well aware of all you did to help make our great victory possible. I will never forget it. . . . Please let me know when I can be of service—and I mean that from the bottom of my heart." After the Longoria affair, however, Johnson had seldom again taken the field on behalf of Mexican-Americans in any battle in which there was danger of antagonizing the South Texas Anglos. Having learned the cost of siding with the oppressed, he took his stance, over and over, on the other side.

Lyndon Johnson was on that side in Washington, too. At the same time the Texas legislators were holding hearings on the Longoria affair, Lyndon Johnson took the field not with the friends of social justice but with its foes by delivering, as part of the Southern battle against President Truman's civil-rights legislation, his "We of the South" maiden speech, a ringing defense of the filibuster that was a key Southern tactic. Senator Richard Russell, of Georgia, leader of the Southern bloc, called that speech "one of the ablest I have ever heard"; it moved the Houston N.A.A.C.P. to telegraph Johnson, "The Negroes who sent you to Congress are ashamed to know that you have stood on the floor against them today."



He had stayed on that side in the years since 1949, voting against the Fair Employment Practices Commission and anti-poll-tax legislation as well as against legislation to outlaw discrimination in unions, voting for legislation that would have allowed draftees to serve in segregated Army units. He either cast votes on the side of the South or helped plan and implement its maneuvers against civil rights not only in 1949 but in 1950 and 1951 and '52 and '53 and '54 and '55. In 1955, having won the Majority Leadership with Southern support, he used the Leader's power to turn back liberal attempts to ban segregation in armed-forces reserve units. And in 1956 he used his power as Majority Leader and his talent for legislative maneuver to inflict on Senate liberals a particularly demoralizing defeat, not only crushing a civil-rights bill but crushing it by a margin greater than ever before. His empathy and tenderness for people oppressed simply because their skin was dark, strong though it was, had not been stronger than his ambition. Over and over again, it had not been his heart but his head that had ruled.

The compassion, though genuine, had taken a back seat to calculation; the Texas journalist and Johnson biographer Ronnie Dugger, who covered Johnson for many years, was to write, in an incisive phrase, of "his real but expendable compassion." The Longoria affair had been proof of the compassion—and of its expendability. The next eight years had been further proof. By the end of 1956, Lyndon Johnson had been on Capitol Hill, as representative and senator, for twenty years, and for twenty years the record had been consistent. He had never supported civil-rights legislation—any civil-rights legislation. In Senate and House alike, his record had been an unbroken one of votes against civil rights: against voting-rights bills; against bills that would have struck at job discrimination and at segregation in other areas of American life; even, in 1940, against a bill that would have protected black Americans from lynching. Moreover, he had been not merely a member of the Senate's Southern anti-civil-rights bloc but an active member—not merely one of the senatorial "sentries" whom Russell deployed on the floor to make sure that the liberals could not sneak a bill through (although he was a vigilant sentry) but one of the South's strategists. The year 1957 had not yet arrived.

But it was coming. ♦

FICTION

BAADER-MEINHOF

BY DON DELILLO

She knew there was someone else in the room. There was no outright noise, just an intimation behind her, a faint displacement of air. She'd been alone for a time, seated on a bench in the middle of the gallery with the paintings set around her, a cycle of fifteen canvases, and this is how it felt to her, that she was sitting as a person does in a mortuary chapel, keeping watch over the body of a relative or a friend.

This was sometimes called the viewing, she believed.

She was looking at Ulrike now, head and upper body, her neck rope-scorched, although she didn't know for certain what kind of implement had been used in the hanging.

She heard the other person walk toward the bench, a man's heavy shuffling stride, and she got up and went to stand before the picture of Ulrike, one of three related images, Ulrike dead in each, lying on the floor of her cell, head in profile. The canvases varied in size. The woman's reality, the head, the neck, the rope burn, the hair, the facial features, were painted, picture to picture, in nuances of obscurity and pall, a detail clearer here than there, the slurred mouth in one painting appearing nearly natural elsewhere, all of it unsystematic.

"Why do you think he did it this way?"

She did not turn to look at him.

"So shadowy. No color."

She said, "I don't know," and went to the next set of images, called "Man Shot Down." This was Andreas Baader. She thought of him by his full name or surname. She thought of Meinhof, she saw Meinhof as first name only, Ulrike, and the same was the case with Gudrun.

"I'm trying to think what happened to them."

"They committed suicide. Or the state killed them."

He said, "The state." Then he said it again, deep-voiced, in a tone of melodramatic menace, trying out a line reading that might be more suitable.

She wanted to be annoyed but felt instead a vague chagrin. It wasn't like her to use this term—"the state"—in the ironclad context of supreme public power. This was not her vocabulary.

The two paintings of Baader dead in his cell were the same size but addressed the subject somewhat differently, and this is what she did now—she concentrated on the differences, arm, shirt, unknown object at the edge of the frame, the disparity or uncertainty.

"I don't know what happened," she said. "I'm only telling you what people believe. It was twenty-five years ago. I don't know what it was like then, in Germany, with bombings and kidnappings."

"They made an agreement, don't you think?"

"Some people believe they were murdered in their cells."

"A pact. They were terrorists, weren't they? When they're not killing other people, they're killing themselves," he said.

She was looking at Andreas Baader, first one painting, then the other, then back again.

"I don't know. Maybe that's even worse in a way. It's so much sadder. There's so much sadness in these pictures."

"There's one that's smiling," he said.

This was Gudrun, in "Confrontation 2."

"I don't know if that's a smile. It could be a smile."

"It's the clearest image in the room. Maybe the whole museum. She's smiling," he said.

She turned to look at Gudrun across the gallery and saw the man on the bench, half turned her way, wearing a suit with tie unknotted, going prematurely bald. She only glimpsed him. He was looking at her, but she was looking past him to the figure of Gudrun in a prison smock, standing against a wall and smiling, most likely, yes, in the middle picture. Three paintings of Gudrun, maybe smiling, smiling, and probably not smiling.

"You need special training to look at these pictures. I can't tell the people apart."

"Yes, you can. Just look. You have to look."

She heard a note of slight reprimand in her voice. She went to the far wall to look at the painting of one of the jail cells, with tall bookshelves covering nearly half the canvas and a dark shape, wraithlike, that may have been a coat on a hanger.

"You're a grad student. Or you teach art," he said. "I'm frankly here to pass the time. That's what I do between job interviews."

She didn't want to tell him that she'd been here three straight days. She moved to the adjacent wall, a little closer to his position on the bench. Then she told him.

"Major money," he said. "Unless you're a member."

"I'm not a member."

"Then you teach art."

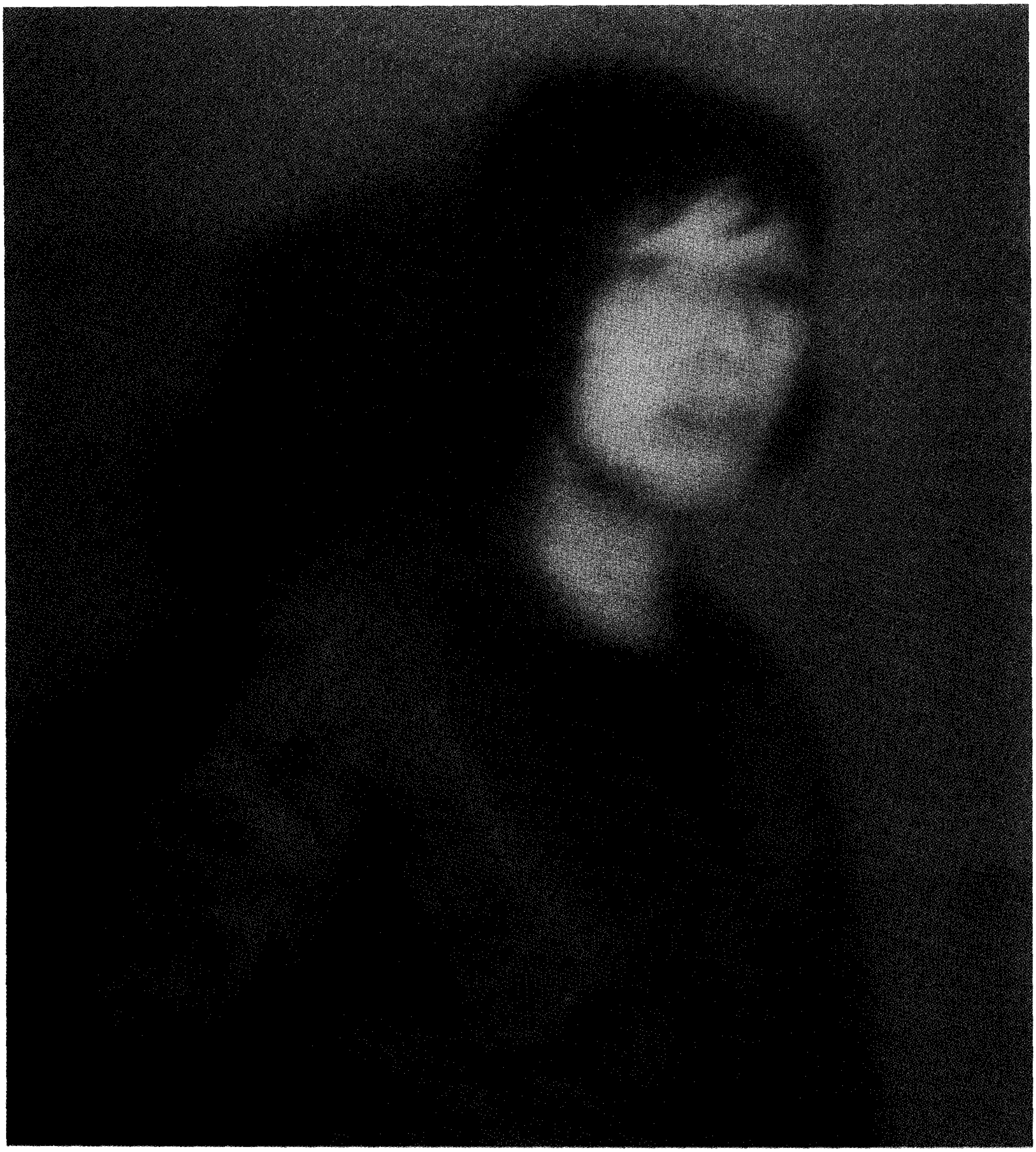
"I don't teach art."

"You want me to shut up. Shut up, Bob. Only my name's not Bob."

In the painting of the coffins being carried through a large crowd, she didn't know they were coffins at first. It took her a long moment to see the crowd itself. There was the crowd, mostly an ashy blur with a few figures in the center-right foreground discernible as individuals standing with their backs to the viewer, and then there was a break near the top of the canvas, a pale strip of earth or roadway, and then another mass of people or trees, and it took some time to understand that the three whitish objects near the center of the picture were coffins being carried through the crowd or simply propped on biers.

Here were the bodies of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and a man whose name she could not recall. He

GERHARD RICHTER, "CONFRONTATION 1"; COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND THE ARTIST



had been shot in his cell. Baader had also been shot. Gudrun had been hanged.

She knew that this had happened about a year and a half after Ulrike. Ulrike dead in May, she knew, of 1976.

Two men entered the gallery, followed by a woman with a cane. All three stood before the display of explanatory material, reading.

The painting of the coffins had something else that wasn't easy to find. She hadn't found it until the second day, yesterday, and it was striking once she'd found it, and inescapable now—an object at the top of the painting, just left of center, a tree perhaps, in the rough shape of a cross.

She went closer to the painting, hearing the woman with the cane move toward the opposite wall.

She knew that these paintings were based on photographs, but she hadn't seen them and didn't know whether there was a bare tree, a dead tree beyond the cemetery, in one of the photos, that consisted of a spindly trunk with a single branch remaining, or two branches forming a transverse piece near the top of the trunk.

He was standing next to her now, the man she'd been talking to.

"Tell me what you see. Honestly. I want to know."

A group entered, led by a guide, and she turned for a moment, watching them collect at the first painting in the cycle, the portrait of Ulrike as a much younger woman, a girl, really, distant and wistful, her hand and face half floating in the sombre dark around her.

"I realize now that the first day I was only barely looking. I thought I was looking, but I was only getting a bare inkling of what's in these paintings. I'm only just starting to look."

They stood looking, together, at the coffins and trees and crowd. The tour guide began speaking to her group.

"And what do you feel when you look?" he said.

"I don't know. It's complicated."

"Because I don't feel anything."

"I think I feel helpless. These paintings make me feel how helpless a person can be."

"Is that why you're here three straight days? To feel helpless?" he said.

"I'm here because I love the paintings. More and more. At first I was confused, and still am, a little. But I know I love the paintings now."

It was a cross. She saw it as a cross, and it made her feel, right or wrong, that there was an element of forgiveness in the picture, that the two men and the woman, terrorists, and Ulrike before them, terrorist, were not beyond forgiveness.

But she didn't point out the cross to the man standing next to her. That was not what she wanted, a discussion on the subject. She didn't think she was imagining a cross, seeing a cross in some free strokes of paint, but she didn't want to hear someone raise elementary doubts.

They went to a snack bar and sat on stools arranged along a narrow counter that measured the length of the front window. She watched the crowds on Seventh Avenue, half the world rushing by, and barely tasted what she ate.

"I missed the first-day pop," he said, "where the stock soars like mythically, four hundred per cent in a couple of hours. I got there for the aftermarket, which turned out to be weak, then weaker."

When the stools were all occupied, people stood and ate. She wanted to go home and check her phone messages.

"I make appointments now. I shave, I smile. My life is living hell," he said, blandly, chewing as he spoke.

He took up space, a tall broad man with a looseness about him, something off hand and shambling. Someone reached past her to snag a napkin from the dispenser. She had no idea what she was doing here, talking to this man.

He said, "No color. No meaning."

"What they did had meaning. It was wrong but it wasn't blind and empty. I think the painter's searching for this. And how did it end the way it did? I think he's asking this. Everybody dead."

"How else could it end? Tell the truth," he said. "You teach art to handicapped children."

She didn't know whether this was interesting or cruel, but saw herself in the window wearing a grudging smile.

"I don't teach art."

"This is fast food that I'm trying to eat slow. I don't have an appointment until three-thirty. Eat slow. And tell me what you teach."

"I don't teach."

She didn't tell him that she was also out of work. She'd grown tired of describing her job, administrative, with an educational publisher, so why make the effort, she thought, now that the job and the company no longer existed.

"Problem is, it's against my nature to eat slow. I have to remind myself. But even then I can't make the adjustment."

But that wasn't the reason. She didn't tell him that she was out of work, because it would give them a situation in common. She didn't want that, an inflection of mutual sympathy, a comradeship. Let the tone stay scattered.

She drank her apple juice and looked at the crowds moving past, at faces that seemed completely knowable for half a second or so, then were forgotten forever in far less time than that.

He said, "We should have gone to a real restaurant. It's hard to talk here. You're not comfortable."

"No, this is fine. I'm kind of in a rush right now."

He seemed to consider this and then reject it, undiscouraged. She thought of going to the washroom and then thought no. She thought of the dead man's shirt, Andreas Baader's shirt, dirtier or more bloody in one picture than in the other.

"And you have a three-o'clock," she said.

"Three-thirty. But that's a long way off. That's another world, where I fix my tie and walk in and tell them who I am." He paused a moment, then looked at her. "You're supposed to say, 'Who are you?' "

She saw herself smile. But she said nothing. She thought that maybe Ulrike's rope burn wasn't a burn but the rope itself, if it was a rope and not a wire or a belt or something else.

He said, "That's your line. 'Who are you?' I set you up beautifully and you totally miss your cue."

They'd finished eating, but their paper cups were not empty yet. They talked about rents and leases, parts of town. She didn't want to tell him where she lived. She lived just three blocks away, in a faded brick building whose limitations and malfunctions she'd come to understand as the texture of her life, to be distinguished from a normal day's complaints.

Then she told him. They were talking about places to run and bike, and he told her where he lived and what his jogging route was, and she said that her bike had been stolen from the basement of her building, and when he asked her where she lived she told him, more or less nonchalantly, and he drank his diet soda and looked out the window, or into it, perhaps, at their faint reflections paired on the glass.

When she came out of the bathroom, he was standing at the kitchen window as if waiting for a view to materialize. There was nothing out there but dusty masonry and glass, the rear of the industrial loft building on the next street.

It was a studio apartment, with the kitchen only partly walled off and the bed in a corner of the room, smallish, without posts or headboard, covered in a bright Berber robe, the only object in the room of some slight distinction.

She knew she had to offer him a drink. She felt awkward, unskilled at this, at unexpected guests. Where to sit, what to say, these were matters to consider. She didn't mention the gin she kept in the freezer.

"You've lived here, what?"

"Just under four months. I've been a nomad," she said. "Sublets, staying with friends, always short-term. Ever since the marriage failed."

"The marriage."

He said this in a modified version of

the baritone rumble he'd used earlier for "the state."

"I've never been married. Believe that?" he said. "Most of my friends my age. All of them really. Married, children, divorced, children. You want kids someday?"

"When is someday? Yes, I think so."

"I think of kids. It makes me feel selfish, to be so wary of having a family. Never mind do I have a job or not. I'll have a job soon, a good one. That's not it. I'm in awe of raising, basically, someone so tiny and soft."

They drank seltzer with wedges of lemon, seated diagonally at the low wooden table, the coffee table where she ate her meals. The conversation surprised her a little. It was not difficult, even in the pauses. The pauses were unembarrassed, and he seemed honest in his remarks.

His cell phone rang. He dug it out of his body and spoke briefly, then sat with the thing in his hand, looking thoughtful.

"I should remember to turn it off. But I think, If I turn it off, what will I miss? Something so incredible."

"The call that changes everything."

"Something so incredible. The total life-altering call. That's why I respect my cell phone."

She wanted to look at the clock.

"That wasn't your interview just now, was it? Cancelled?"

He said it wasn't, and she sneaked a look at the clock on the wall. She wondered whether she wanted him to miss his interview. That couldn't be what she wanted.

"Maybe you're like me," he said. "You have to find yourself on the verge of something happening before you can begin to prepare for it. That's when you get serious."

"Are we talking about fatherhood?"

"Actually, I cancelled the interview myself. When you were in there," he said, nodding toward the bathroom.

She felt an odd panic. He finished his seltzer, tipping his head back until an ice cube slid into his mouth. They sat a while, letting the ice melt. Then he looked directly at her, fingering one of the dangled ends of his necktie.

"Tell me what you want."

She sat there.

"Because I sense you're not ready and I don't want to do something too soon. But, you know, we're here."

She didn't look at him.

"I'm not one of those controlling men. I don't need to control anyone. Tell me what you want."

"Nothing."

"Conversation, talk, whatever. Affection," he said. "This is not a major moment in the world. It'll come and go. But we're here, so."

"I want you to leave, please."

He shrugged and said, "Whatever." Then he sat there.

"You said, 'Tell me what you want.' I want you to leave."

He sat there. He didn't move. He said, "I cancelled the thing for a reason. I don't think this is the reason, this particular conversation. I'm looking at you. I'm saying to myself, You know what she's like? She's like someone convalescing."

"I'm willing to say it was my mistake."

"I mean we're here. How did this happen? There was no mistake. Let's be friends," he said.

"I think we have to stop now."

"Stop what? What are we doing?"

He was trying to speak softly, to take the edge off the moment.

"She's like someone convalescing. Even in the museum, this is what I thought. All right. Fine. But now we're here. This whole day, no matter what we say or do, it'll come and go."

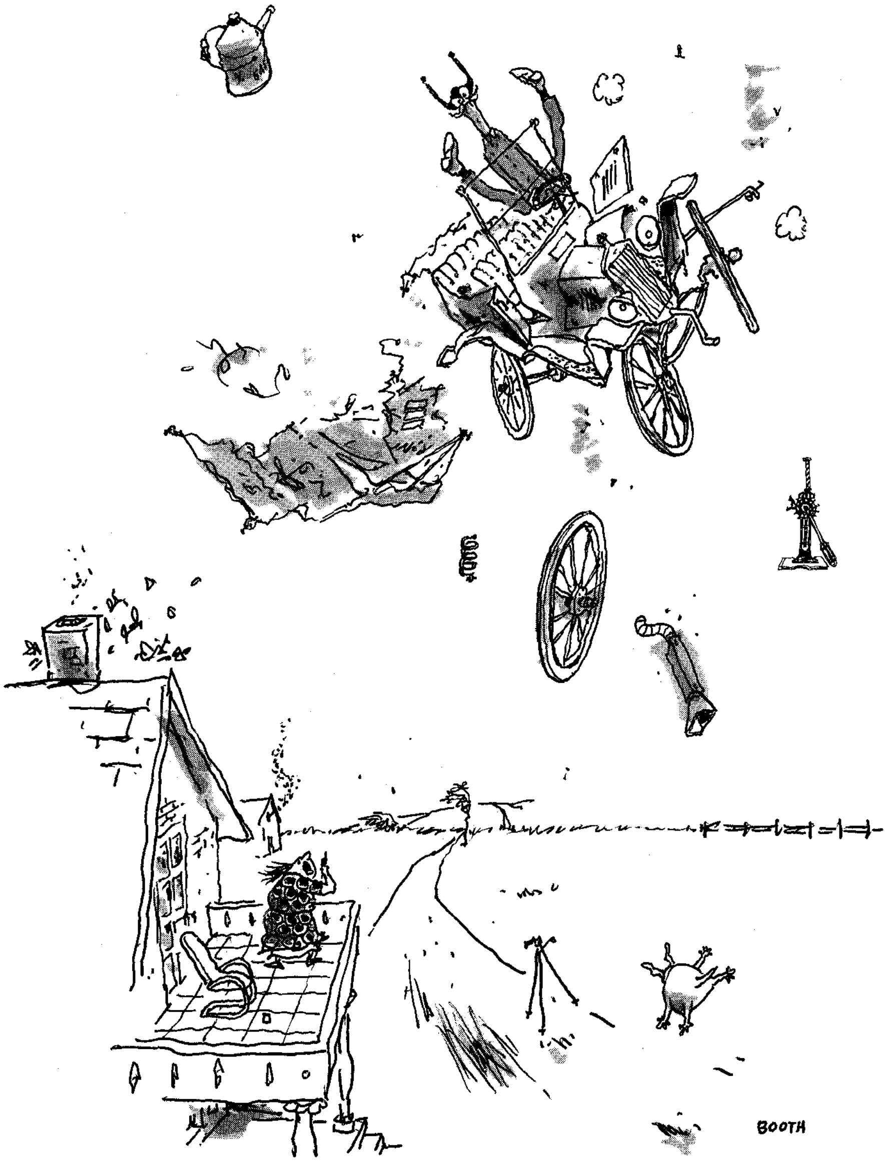
"I don't want to continue this."

"Be friends."

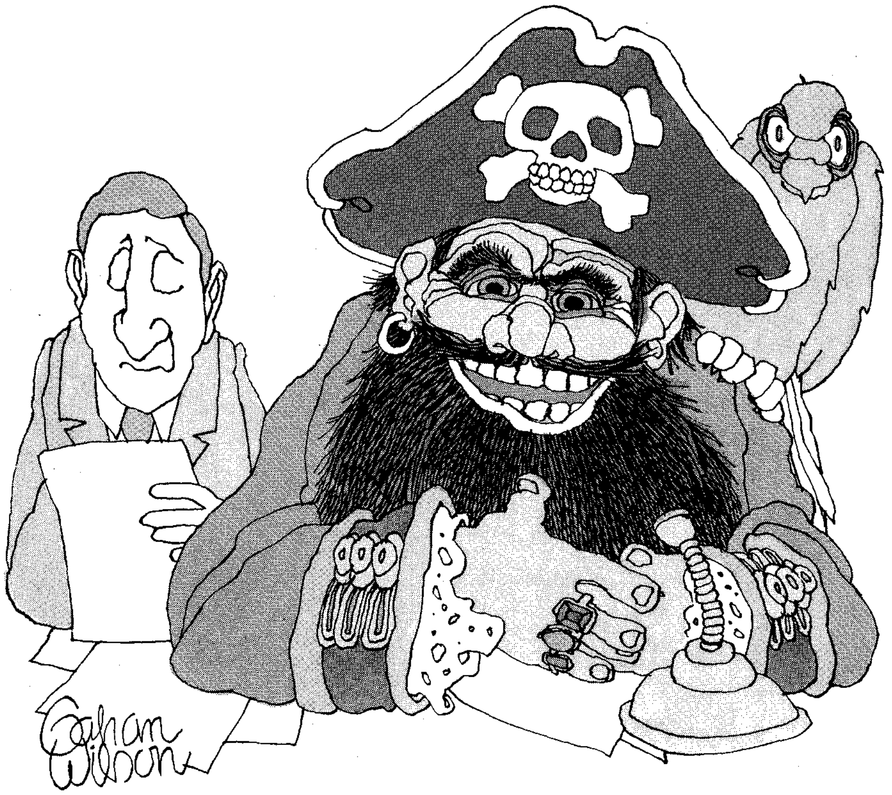
"This is not right."

"No, be friends."

His voice carried an intimacy so false it seemed a little threatening. She didn't know why she was still sitting here. He



"Amy, Mr. Stoklasa has caught a tornado."



"I swear, mateys, 'twas me clear understanding that me and the lads was only running some kind of a cruise ship!"

• •

leaned toward her then, placing a hand lightly on her forearm.

"I don't try to control people. This is not me."

She drew away and stood up, and he was all around her then. She tucked her head into her shoulder. He didn't exert pressure or try to caress her breasts or hips but held her in a kind of loose containment. For a moment, she seemed to disappear, tucked and still, in breathless hiding. Then she pulled away. He let her do this and looked at her so levelly, with such measuring effect, that she barely recognized him. He was ranking her, marking her in some awful and withering way.

"Be friends," he said.

She found she was shaking her head, trying to disbelieve the moment, to make it reversible, a misunderstanding. He watched her. She was standing near the bed, and this was precisely the information contained in his look, these two things, her and the bed. He shrugged as if to say, It's only right. Because what's the point of being here if we don't do what we're here to do? Then he took off his jacket, a set of unhurried movements that seemed to use up the room. In the rumpled white shirt he was bigger than ever, sweating, completely unknown to her. He held the jacket at his side, arm extended.

"See how easy. Now you. Start with the shoes," he said. "First one, then the other."

She went toward the bathroom. She didn't know what to do. She walked along the wall, head down, a person marching blindly, and went into the bathroom. She closed the door but was afraid to lock it. She thought it would make him angry, provoke him to do something, wreck something, worse. She did not slide the bolt. She was determined not to do this unless she heard him approach the bathroom. She didn't think he'd moved. She was certain, nearly certain that he was standing near the coffee table.

She said, "Please leave."

Her voice was unnatural, so fluted and small it scared her further. Then she heard him move. It sounded almost leisurely. It was a saunter, almost, and it took him past the radiator, where the cover rattled slightly, and in the direction of the bed.

"You have to go," she said, louder now.

He was sitting on the bed, unbuckling his belt. This is what she thought she heard, the tip of the belt sliding out of the loop and then a little flick of tongue and clasp. She heard the zipper coming down.

She stood against the bathroom door. After a while she heard him breathing, a sound of concentrated work, nasal and cadenced. She stood there and waited, head down, body on the door. There was nothing she could do but listen and wait.

When he was finished, there was a long pause, then some rustling and shifting. She thought she heard him put on his jacket. He came toward her now. She realized she could have locked the door earlier, when he was on the bed. She stood there and waited. Then she felt him lean against the door, the dead weight of him, an inch away, not pushing but sagging. She slid the bolt into the chamber, quietly. He was pressed there, breathing, sinking into the door.

He said, "Forgive me."

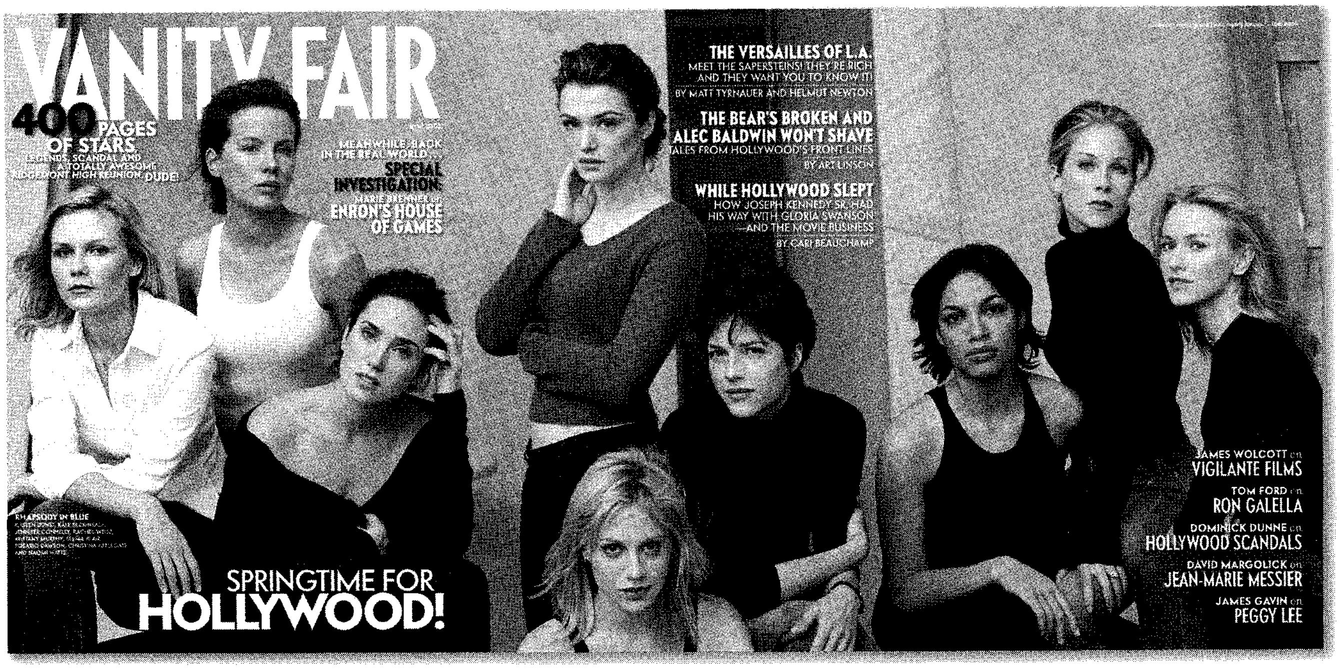
His voice was barely audible, close to a moan. She stood there and waited.

He said, "I'm so sorry. Please. I don't know what to say."

She waited for him to leave. When she heard him cross the room and close the door behind him, finally, she waited a full minute longer. Then she came out of the bathroom and locked the front door.

She saw everything twice now. She was where she wanted to be, and alone, but nothing was the same. Bastard. Nearly everything in the room had a double effect—what it was and the association it carried in her mind. She went out walking, and when she came back the connection was still there, at the coffee table, on the bed, in the bathroom. Bastard. She had dinner in a small restaurant nearby and went to bed early.

When she went back to the museum the next morning he was alone in the gallery, seated on the bench in the middle of the room, his back to the entranceway, and he was looking at the last painting in the cycle, the largest by far and maybe most breathtaking, the one with the coffins and cross, called "Funeral." ♦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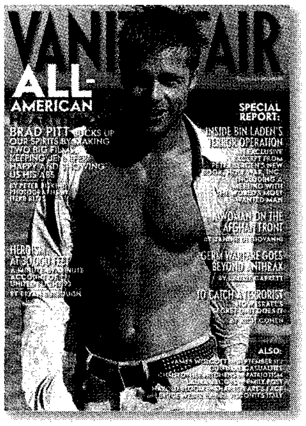
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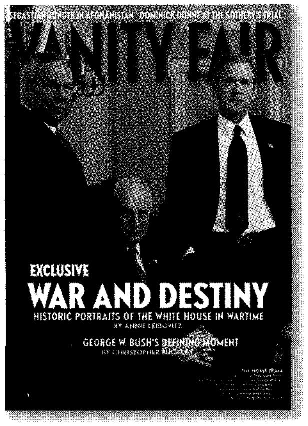
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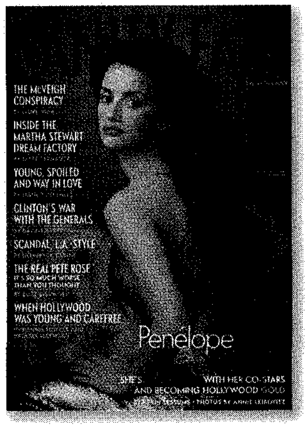
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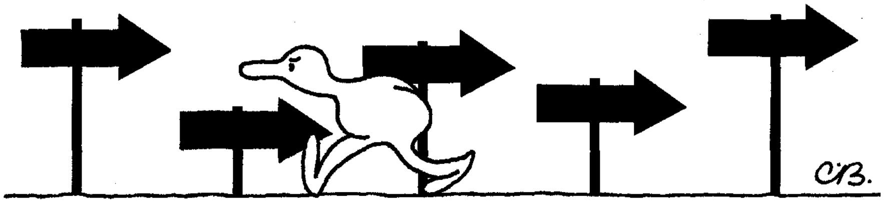


THE THEATRE

O.K. CHORALE

An English take on Rodgers and Hammerstein.

BY JOHN LAHR

In 1959, when Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II were beginning work on "The Sound of Music"—the story goes—their co-producer Richard Halliday, who was also the husband and manager of the show's star, Mary Martin, came to them with a great idea for her first entrance: she would be discovered in a tree and, as she climbed down, catch her bloomers on a branch. Rodgers and Hammerstein rejected the idea out of hand. Halliday was incensed. "You know what's wrong with you guys?" he said, stalking out. "All *you* care about is the *show!*"

In that joke lies the essence of Rodgers and Hammerstein's revolution in musical storytelling, which began in 1943, with "Oklahoma!" In its out-of-town tryouts, the show, then titled "Away We Go!," was billed as a "musical comedy"; by the time it arrived in New York, with its now indelible brand name, it had become a "musical play." With that semantic mutation, the musical's job description changed, virtually overnight. Anarchic, freewheeling frivolity that traded in joy—in other words, in the comedian's resourcefulness—was renounced for an artful marriage of music and lyrics that traded in narrative. Seriousness replaced sass. Big names were no longer needed to carry the show; the show itself was the star. In show-biz terms, Rodgers and Hammerstein had hit the mother lode. They had engineered the musical equivalent of the interchangeable part, which insured a sort of quality control. Improvisation was no longer an element, and the musical was now, in principle, anyway, infinitely repeatable. Rodgers and Hammerstein were not just a sensation—they were a corporation.

Because of "Oklahoma!" 's enormous subsequent influence, its novelties—no opening ensemble number, chorus girls in long dresses, dancers who don't appear until late in the first act, the integrated score—have lost some of their original lustre. In the Royal National Theatre's three-hour revival (now at the Gershwin), directed by Trevor Nunn, the show's heady mixture of wonder and ambition is best captured in its production values. Anthony Ward's picturesque set immediately submerges us in a gorgeous world of folk innocence. As the scrim of blue sky flies up, Aunt Eller Murphy's spread—the farmhouse billowing gray smoke from its chimney, the windmill, the smokehouse—is revealed in miniature. In the next beat, the set revolves from long shot to closeup; corn as high as an elephant's eye looms into view, as two white birds wheel above it. By the time Curly McLain (the big-voiced and charming Patrick Wilson) ambles somewhat theatrically onstage to celebrate the joys of the radiant morning, the charm of the pristine landscape and of the homesteading values that go with it has been clinched.

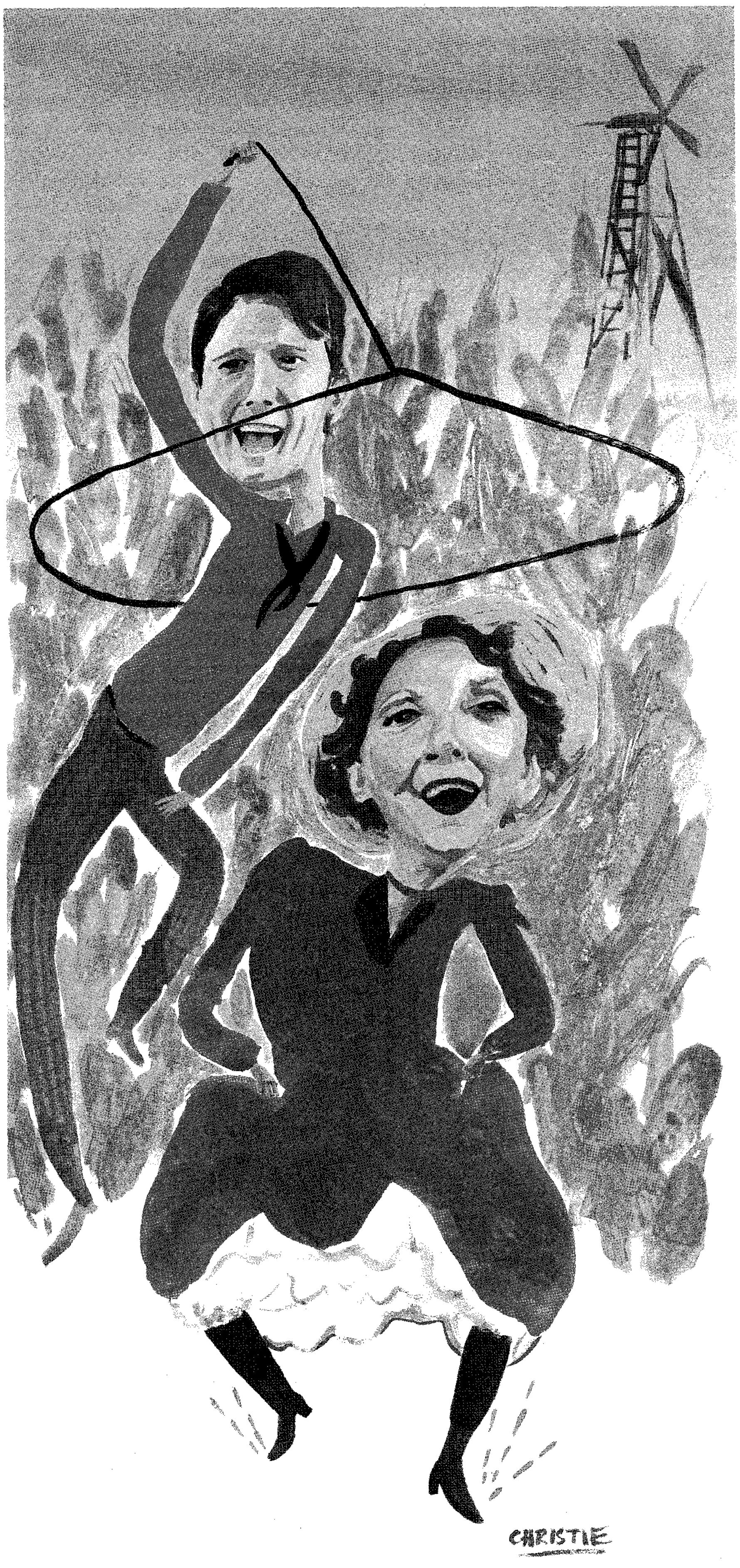
In the making of musicals, Nunn, who has directed "Cats," "Les Misérables," and "Sunset Boulevard," among others, is a four-star general. His stage pictures spill over with meticulous, articulate energy. But technique, which can make the show work, is not enough to make it wonderful. Here, I think, the issue of cultural chemistry comes into play. To the English—and I've lived in London for thirty years—Americans are a sort of mutant breed, whose optimism is a sure sign of emotional aberration. The English are constitutionally unable to fathom it, and for good reason. American optimism has its root in abundance and in the vastness of the land that "Oklahoma!" celebrates. Britain, on the other hand, is an island the size of Utah. Its culture is one of scarcity; its preferred idiom is irony—a language of limits. In the retranslation of an award-winning English version of an American classic to its natural Broadway habitat, an emotional lopsidedness has become evident, particularly in the casting.

The linchpins of the show are Aunt Eller, played by the gritty, droll comedienne Andrea Martin, who is American and nails it, and the feisty, lovelorn Laurey, played by the fine-voiced, demure Josefina Gabrielle, who is English and doesn't. It's not talent that's at issue here—Gabrielle is the first Laurey to dance her own Dream Ballet—but national character. The show is about Western women, and Gabrielle's Laurey lacks that very American sense of gumption, a combination of buoyancy and backbone. The problem is even more egregious in the casting of Jessica Boevers. Ado Annie is the girl who can't say no; Boevers is the girl who can't bring any genuine humor to the role. Without a whiff of the sexual ripeness that should brighten the part, she plays Ado Annie as a squealing airhead. Her terrific songs, of course, still get laughs. With lines like "I cain't resist a Romeo / In a sombrero and chaps. / Soon as I sit on their laps / Somethin' inside of me snaps," how can you miss? Ado Annie's "Persian" paramour is Ali Hakim (the Willie Howard look-alike Aasif Mandvi), an itinerant peddler turned into an interminable running gag that is really about the chiselling Jew. English audiences may be comfortable with the racist stereotype, but Broadway audiences quickly weary of it, and of him.

There are stupendous pleasures in the show nonetheless. Many of them are due to the high-spirited, humorous choreography of Susan Stroman. In the Dream Ballet, which becomes a nightmare—Laurey imagines marrying Curly and then being raped by his rival for her affection, the beefy ranch hand Jud Fry (the excellent Shuler Hensley)—there’s a magical moment when the dancers first appear through quivering corn stalks. Stroman also gives some thrilling moves to Justin Bohon, who plays Will Parker, the lariat-throwing, back-flipping dervish who returns from Kansas City determined to take Ado Annie as his bride. In the rousing production number “The Farmer and the Cowman,” which opens Act II, all the scenic and literary excellences of the script come together. In one singing, dancing swoop, the show manages to raise a roof, make a sociological point about class division on the range, have a hoedown and a punch-up, and move the plot along: Laurey loves Curly, and wants him to bid on her food basket at the Box Social; Jud pines for her, but loses the bidding war. Trouble is brewing in the prairie paradise.

In many ways, the character of Jud Fry is both “Oklahoma!” ’s inspiration and its dramaturgical sack of rocks. Overweight and ugly, Fry is a compendium of society’s darkest forces. He’s a loner. He has no social skills. His hovel is papered with pornography, and, to put the icing on the devil’s-food cake, he admits to being capable of murder. Of “Oklahoma!” ’s many innovations, certainly its most enduring one lies symbolically here. With Fry, Rodgers and Hammerstein made a place for darkness within the bright world of the American musical. By emotionally embracing all of life, they coaxed the musical out of its long adolescence and forced it to grow up. They also made another useful narrative discovery: to show brilliance, you need shadow.

Yet, in “Oklahoma!,” their first outing as a writing team, Fry feels like a forced fit. As far as I can tell from the libretto, Curly, after learning that Laurey may be driven to the social by Jud, moseys down to Jud’s house to check out the competition. He walks in the door, scopes out the pornographic pictures while Jud cleans his gun, and then “cheerfully” suggests that Jud hang himself from the rafters. In the song “Pore Jud Is Daid,” Curly paints a picture of Jud’s death and burial. Jud “becomes then, for a while, not just wicked, but a comic figure flattered by the attentions he might receive if he were dead,” Hammerstein wrote. “He becomes also a pathetic figure, pathetically lonely for attentions he has never received while alive. The audience begins to feel some



Justin Bohon, as Will Parker, and Andrea Martin, as Aunt Eller, in “Oklahoma!”

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sympathy for him, some understanding of him as a man." I believe Hammerstein. What I don't believe is the way the song is set up—that Curly would walk into the lair of a subnormal lout, especially one with a gun in his hand, and in less than a minute brightly suggest that he kill himself.

In the second act, Jud puts a clumsy move on Laurey and she kicks him off the farm, only to have him come back three weeks later to haunt her wedding to Curly, like the Ancient Mariner at the feast. In Jud's menacing intrusion, his brawling, and his demise (he falls on his own knife and dies), there is no doubt, and therefore no drama. There is also, really, no necessity. Having just lustily sung the famous title song at the wedding banquet, the cast is in high festival mood, a fitting climax to the romance. The evening feels over. Jud's sudden re-appearance adds nothing to the plot and, after a hundred and fifty minutes, is about as welcome as a returning kamikaze pilot. Although it's heresy to say it, the production could lose the last fifteen minutes—Jud's revenge, his death, and Curly's subsequent trial, in a sort of kangaroo court that excuses him to continue his marriage—and only the purists would mind. *We* know that Curly is innocent, damn it; and the whole brouhaha has as much clout as a popgun.

In his memoir, "Musical Stages," Rodgers averred that the show's opening scene—a cowboy strolling onto the stage where a single woman is churning butter—announced to the audience, "Watch out! This is a different kind of musical." He went on to say, "Everything in the production was made to conform to the simple open-air spirit of the story; this was essential, and certainly a rarity in the musical theatre." Trevor Nunn's version of "Oklahoma!" preserves the crowd-pleasing commercial zest of the original; but on the evening I saw the show only a handful of audience members stood to applaud the hardworking cast, confirming my suspicion that the open-air spirit of the evening had been slowly leached away. "Oklahoma!" is still a beautiful piece of craftsmanship, ravishing in its music and lyrics, stunning in its design. But the fun machine needs some souping up. Understandably, the owners are loath to lay a hand on the engine. I counsel tough love. As Aunt Eller herself says, "You cain't deserve the sweet and tender in life less'n you're tough." ♦

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THE ART WORLD

THE HITLER SHOW

The Jewish Museum revisits the Nazis.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

Ten years ago, Bruce Nauman was asked by officials in Hannover, Germany, to conceive a Holocaust memorial for their city. He came up with an idea that has become a cherished legend in the art world, although he eventually decided against proposing it. The work would feature a sign that said, "We are sorry for what we did, and we promise not to do it again." When I tell people about this, they invariably crack up. What's so hilarious? I think it's the succinctness of the statement: Nauman isolated the two emotions—remorse and repentance—that are the rhetorical burden of any German memorial to the Holocaust, and he stripped them of folderol. When you think about it, for fifty-seven years an apology and an assurance have been what the world has wanted to hear from Germany and, really, *all* that the world has wanted to hear. Whatever else might be said has belonged to the victims. Of course, with the dying out of the Second World War generation, this state of affairs was bound to change. Today, both direct responsibility and proprietary grievance regarding the Holocaust are expiring like patents, and the business of reflecting on it has become a free-for-all.

An unsurprising controversy surrounded the Jewish Museum's daring exhibition "Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art" well before it opened, on March 17th. The show represents thirteen mostly young, little-known conceptual artists from seven countries and makes a case, in the words of its curator, Norman Kleeblatt, for "works in which viewers would encounter the perpetrators face to face in scenarios in which ethical and moral issues cannot be easily resolved." The idea of artists making clever works about the Holocaust struck many observers as an unacceptable offense to the sensitivities, even posthumous ones, of survivors. Others countered by ritually endorsing art's mission to challenge conventional thinking—a conventional thought if ever there was one. Few took account of the show's unacknowledged but obvious inspiration: "The Producers." Now, I am among those who deem "The Producers," on either stage or screen, the funniest thing that ever was. Its effect is what a baby feels while playing peekaboo: laughter as an explosive release from anxiety. We were afraid that Adolf Hitler would keep making us feel bad forever, but you know what? He's dead, and we're not. In "Mirroring Evil," only one of the nineteen works has a Brooksian zing to it, but the show plainly owes its timing to Max Bialystock's reign on Broadway.

Talk about bad taste? Let's. Most of "Mirroring Evil" fails not out of irreverence but out of inchoate earnestness. Take Zbigniew Libera's "Lego Concentration Camp Set," which consists of seven imprinted boxes picturing what the title describes. Rather than flip off fear, this lugubrious sally diffuses it, contaminating an excellent toy to no cogent end. There are significant and trivial varieties of shock in art. The significant kind—the onset of Impressionism, Marcel Duchamp's urinal, "Springtime for Hitler"—abruptly heralds a sea change in culture. Trivial shock diddles the status quo, altering nothing. It's very easy to achieve: just cross discordant wires and dig the fleeting spark. The show's artists do this by short-circuiting Nazism with references to childhood (Libera's Lego piece), commerce (Libera again), and sex. Sex especially. Dilettantish sadomasochism—giddily eroticizing themes of cruel power—abounds at the Jewish Museum.

Piotr Uklanski, from Poland, displays a hundred and forty-seven alluring color prints of actors in Nazi roles. (Clint Eastwood musters a terrific look; David Niven is pathetic.) Less entertaining is a video montage by Maciej Toporowicz, another Polish artist, that includes shots of Calvin Klein ads and body-beautiful Nazi propaganda. What these things have in common—solemn smut—is simply insufficient. (Why this seemingly irresistible urge to pair Nazism with consumer goods, as if they partook of a common essence? When the artist Tom Sachs displays a model concentration camp made from a Prada box, isn't he holding the power of Prada in excessive awe? And when the English artist Alan Schechner digitally inserts himself, holding a Diet Coke can, in a picture of Buchenwald inmates, I quit.) The Israeli Roee Rosen contributes an extended fantasy, in words and drawings, about Eva Braun's having goodbye sex with Hitler in the bunker; it seems to have been fine, shivery fun for the artist. Over all, the show suggests an emergency ward for cases of toxic narcissism.

The day is enlivened, if not saved, by a piece that recalls both Brooks and Nauman. For "Hebrew Lesson," a repeating thirteen-second video, the Israeli artist Boaz Arad spliced together isolated words and syllables from films of Hitler's speeches to create a herky-jerky but intelligible sentence in Hebrew: "*Shalom, Yerushalayim, ani mitnatzel*" ("Hello, Jerusalem, I apologize"). Shots of the dictator in impressive settings flash by. At the video's end, he is glimpsed ducking his head and smoothing his hair with both hands, in that self-adoring, epicene way he had. Delivering a touch of the sublime, Arad deals successfully with a crucial issue that the other artists in "Mirroring Evil" furtively exploit: Nazism's aesthetic appeal.

I think that we could save ourselves a great deal of intellectual backing and filling by accepting Nazism—along with everything else that it was—as one of the twentieth century's major stylistic movements. Leni Riefenstahl's films, Albert Speer's architecture, the choreographed rallies, those uniforms, and the Nazi flag were creative feats. Why pretend otherwise? Giving the Devil his due is an intelligent preparation for defeating him. The bulk of the work in "Mirroring Evil" smugly suggests that we are in denial about Nazism's seductive resources. The more conscious we are of the limited but potent attraction of Nazi culture, the less its redolence will strike third-rate artists as a surefire ticket to sensation. ◆

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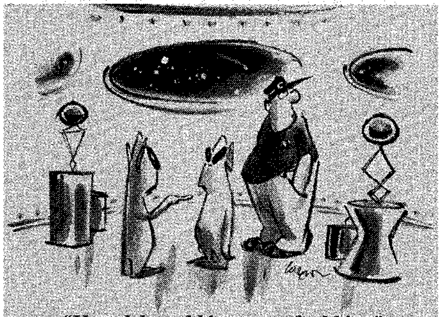

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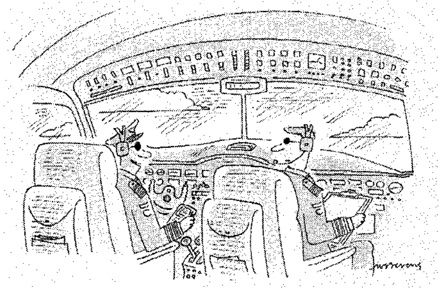
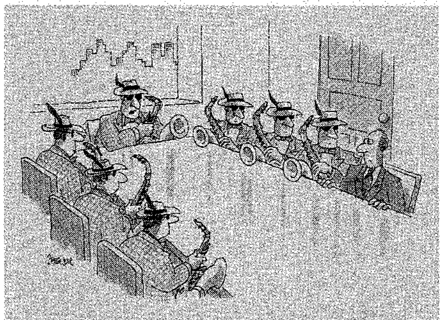


"This is so cool! I'm flying this thing completely on my Palm pilot!"



"Damn it, Hopkins, didn't you get yesterday's memo?"

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A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE PORCUPINE

A pilgrimage to Popper.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

Many years ago, when I was young and still in search of wisdom, I went on a pilgrimage to meet the man I thought was the wisest in the world. I came away wiser, though what I learned was what most pilgrims learn, which is that if you want to become wise you should not go on pilgrimages. I hadn't thought much about the pilgrimage, or the wise man, until the past few months, when a friend sent me a new book that brought it, and him, back to mind.

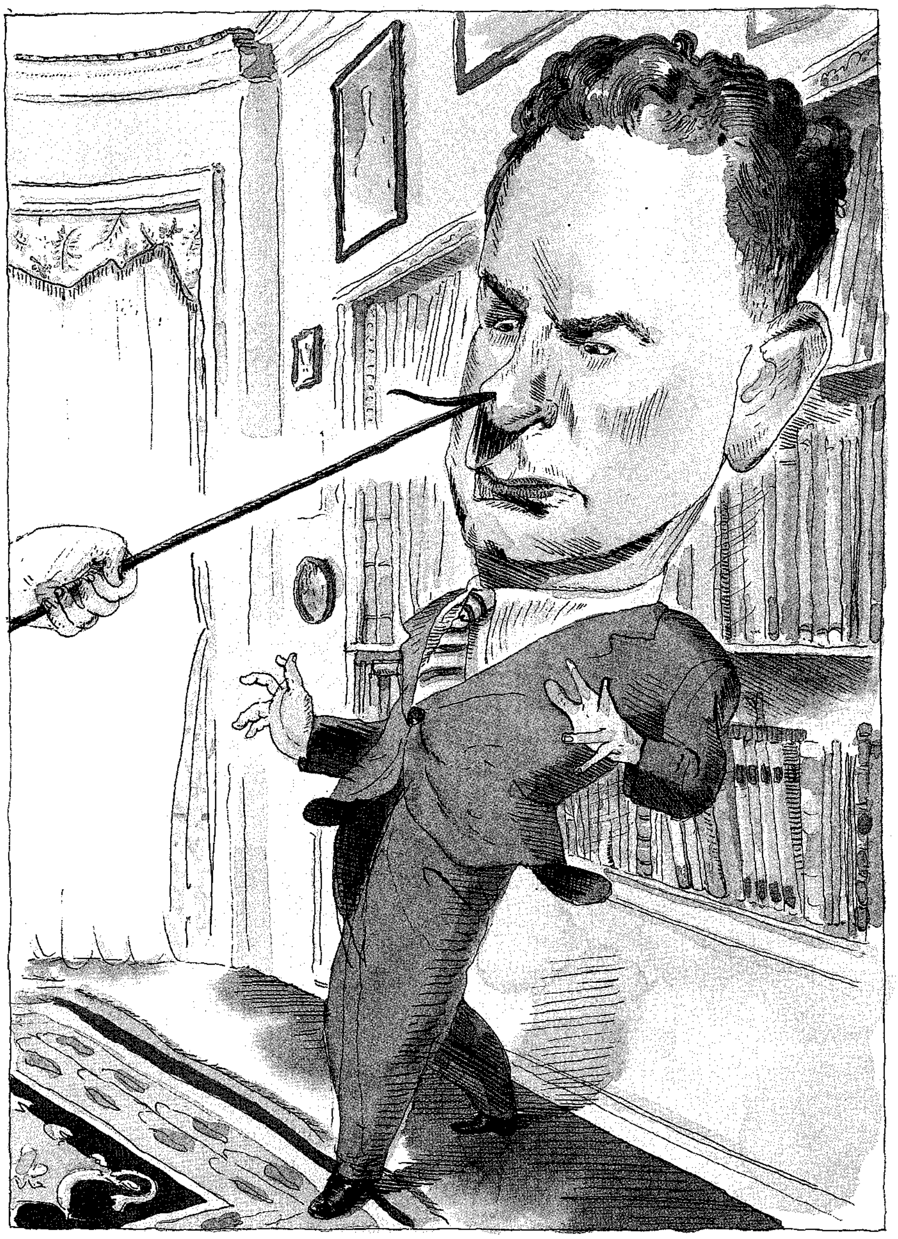
The book is "Wittgenstein's Poker" (Ecco; $24), by the British journalists David Edmonds and John Eidinow, and it has become an improbable best-seller. It's a terrific book, a fuguelike account of everything we know and don't know about a ten-minute squabble between two great and ornery Austrian-Anglo-Jewish philosophers, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Popper—the wise man I went to see. The squabble took place in 1946 in a Cambridge tutorial room, where Wittgenstein either did or did not threaten Popper with a poker and Popper either did or did not, when asked by Wittgenstein to give an instance of a moral rule, say, "Not to threaten visiting lecturers with pokers." The authors conclude that the poker incident happened but that the line was strictly a wishful afterthought. They also suggest that a real pivot of the fight was both men's need for the attention of a third philosopher in the room, Bertrand Russell, who was Wittgenstein's intellectual father.

Though Wittgenstein is the star of "Wittgenstein's Poker," Popper is, I think, meant to be its hero: while Wittgenstein's puzzles made for the bigger reputation, Popper's problems presented the bigger ambition. Yet Popper suffered from the shortest half-life, and wore the smallest halo, of any great thinker who has ever lived. He reconfigured the image of the natural sciences in a way that altered everything from art history to Marxist philosophy, whose pretensions to scientific force he ended. In 1945, Russell could write, as an unexceptionable fact, that science dealt with the realm of the definite, philosophy with the unprovable. A half century later, no philosopher (including Russell) would have written that. Everyone accepts that science centers on the hypothetical and the conjectural, the imaginative leap and the subsequent search for a significant test, and the questions turn on just what tests, and just what guesses, count.

Popper was almost single-handedly responsible for this revolution and never got enough credit for it, as he would have been the first to tell you. In fact, since his death, in 1994, he seems to have receded right into history. Though a very good biography of him came out in 2000, Malachi Haim Hacohen's "Karl Popper: The Formative Years" (Cambridge), and though he has had fierce admirers (George Soros's Open Society Institute was inspired by him), his reputation is closer today to Ayn Rand's, say, than to Russell's, sectarian rather than secure.

Among the many themes of "Wittgenstein's Poker," the most human involves not so much the space between character and achievement ("Nasty Men Make Nice Things; Unpleasant People Think Important Thoughts" is, after all, the headline on almost every chapter in cultural history) as the more ticklish, almost taboo subject of intellectual glamour. Why is it that some people—and no one is a better instance of this than Wittgenstein—are able to impose their personality so forcefully on a time that they seem unencompassably large, while others, however large their thoughts, remain in some way little? This mystery, which, fully inflated, takes in everything from the different receptions of John the Baptist and Jesus to those of Billy

Joel and Bruce Springsteen, is one of the great, unacknowledged motives of human affairs—and one whose mystery I experienced when I went on my pilgrimage to visit Popper, at his home in the English countryside. No hero, I learned, ever made it harder on his worshippers, and no thinker gave better evidence in his person of just how much it is *temperament* that can fix a thinker's place in the history of thought, changing and transposing and often untuning the song he sings.



Did Wittgenstein threaten Karl Popper with a poker in a Cambridge tutorial room?

BARRY BLITT

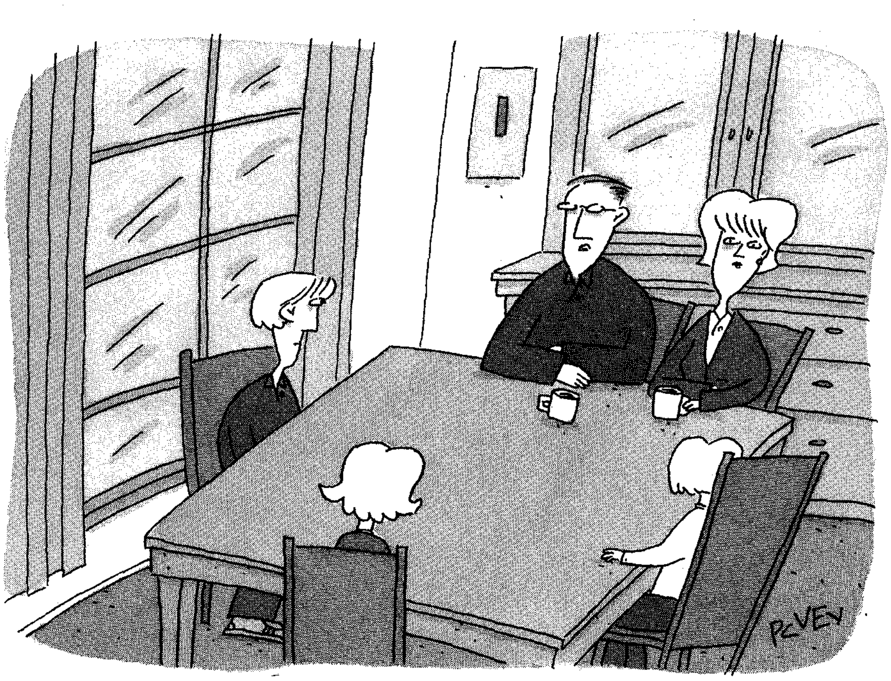
It was the winter of 1975; I was staying with my sister in Oxford, and had spent Christmas in Paris with my cousin, with whom I went to movies. I also went to the Louvre every day. I haunted Raphael's portrait of Baldassare Castiglione, the famous courtier and humanist. In Castiglione's gentle gaze and half smile, civilization dancing at the serene corners of the eyes, I was sure that I was already seeing the face of the philosopher I was on my way to visit.

Karl Popper had been an inquisitive, socially conscious young man in post-First World War Vienna. He was from a solid but by no means aristocratic family of assimilated Jews, and he had, one senses from his biographer, a kind of Gandhi-like innocence that comes to people who will one day think big thoughts. Preoccupied by social questions—his essential obsessions as a youth were music and the education of poor children, and for years he did social work—he was excited by the philosophy of science at a time when Einstein's physics was new, and had about it a world-changing, everyone's-talking-about-it thrill.

Even though the new physics was transforming everything in science, most philosophers agreed about what science was. Scientists, it seemed clear, began with careful observations, cautiously proceeded to a tentative hypothesis, progressed to more secure but still provisional theories, and only in the end achieved, after a long process of verification, the security of permanent laws. Newton saw the apple fall, hypothesized that it had fallen at one speed rather than another for a reason, theorized that there might be an attraction between all bodies with mass, and then, at long last, arrived at a law of gravitation to explain everything. This "observation up" or "apple down" picture of how science works was so widespread that it defined what we mean by science: when Sherlock Holmes says that he never theorizes in advance of the facts, he is explaining why he can be called a scientific detective. Various thinkers poked holes in this picture, but generally their point was that, while the program was right, it was harder to do than it appeared.

That picture, though, as the eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher David Hume had been the first to insist, was always haunted by a small, permanent ghost of uncertainty: no matter how many times the apple fell down, one could never be entirely certain that someday an apple might not fall up. In the textbook example, if the law was "All swans are white" you could count white swans for centuries but still not know that all swans were white, not for sure. This caveat—Hume's "problem of induction"—seemed to most working scientists, however, to be one of those insoluble philosophical difficulties that haunt the game without actually spoiling the party.

Popper came of age around the Vienna Circle, a group of philosophers who were trying to apply the principles of science to all human thought. Yet he had, in a way, been even more deeply affected by the new physics than his contemporaries, because he saw that Einstein's observations weren't just new ones



"I suppose you're all wondering why your mother and I brought you into the world."

• •

resting on the edifice of old ones. The new physics had begun as stunning, original insights. What if science didn't proceed from observations to theories—what if it was the other way around? But, if the guesses came first, how could you tell the right conjectures from the wrong ones? How could you tell the new physics from the old astrology? Because of a simple asymmetry, Popper went on to reason: no number of white swans could tell you that all white swans were white, but a single black swan could tell you that they weren't. Hume's problem might be not a problem at all but a disguised solution—the problem of induction wasn't a problem for science, because scientists had never really used induction in the first place. Newton thought of gravity, and then saw the apple falling.

Science, Popper proposed—first in conversations with members of the Vienna Circle, later in his first published book, "Logik der Forschung" ("The Logic of Scientific Discovery")—didn't proceed through observations confirmed by verification; it proceeded through wild, overarching conjectures, which generalized "beyond the data" but were always controlled and sharpened by falsification, by refutation, by the single decisive experiment, or swan. It was the conscious, purposeful search for falsifications, and the survival of theories in the face of them, that allowed science to proceed and objective knowledge to grow.

In the real world, as Popper knew perfectly well, the response of the scientist who has proposed that all swans are white when a black swan appears is not to say, cheerfully, "Wrong again!" It is to say, "You call that a swan?" The principle of falsification would begin an argument rather than prove a point. But the argument was the point. The argument that the black swan would produce—an argument about what evidence was crucial, and why—was different from all other kinds of argument. Science wasn't a form of proof. It was a style of quarrelling. The reason science gave you sure knowledge you could count on was that it wasn't sure and you couldn't count on it. Science wasn't the name for knowledge that had been proved true; it was the name for guesses that could be proved false.

In exile in New Zealand in the forties, Popper gave this insight a surprising political twist in the greatest of his books, "The Open Society and Its Enemies." He saw that political philosophers, from Plato to Hegel and Marx, had tried to make political philosophy rigorous by making it, like the false idea of science, authoritarian, proceeding from close observations to fixed laws of history. Once it was apparent that science had no certain truths, or secure foundations, the notion that a good theory of the state should begin with something solid—with fixed ideals about virtue, or with a large-scale view of historical development—had to give way, too. A truly scientific political philosophy would be "open"—to criticism even of its own foundations—and so would the societies based on that philosophy. (Popper pointed out that Marx, in particular, had made clear predictions—and, as history falsified each one of them, the Marxists pretended that they hadn't been made in the first place, disguising the fact that Marxism failed by sanctifying its white swans and sending its black swans, so to speak, to the Gulag.)

In the forties and fifties, when the most gifted defenders of humanism were counting up the "costs" of modernity—uncertainty, ambiguity, alienation—Popper was arguing that these things were exactly what allowed science to tell us plain truths and give us great gifts. The growth of knowledge begins in uncertainty, and increases it: it opens more questions than it answers, and is possible only through the institutionalization of doubt. Anxiety is fruitful. All you need for liberty to continue is a tradition of seeking out criticism. In the Louvre for the umpteenth time, I looked at Castiglione's smile and was reminded of the serenity this belief must bring to the man who held it.

A few days after my return to Oxford, I got on a bus to High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, which was the nearest stop to Popper's home, in the hamlet of Penn. (I didn't record, in the notes I made later about my pilgrimage, exactly what I said in my letter to the great man, but I had somehow wangled an invitation.) I recalled something that he had written in his autobiography, "Unended Quest": "It was after our first visit to America that we moved to Penn in Buckinghamshire, which was then a quiet and beautiful little place."

Popper had told me on the telephone to take a taxi from the bus depot, and the cabdriver, a Pakistani, I think, re-acted immediately when I gave him Popper's address.

"Ah, Professor Pop!" he said. "A very smart man."

"You've met him?" I asked.

"Oh, many times. He never talks. All the time he is busy thinking, thinking."

"His books are very famous."

"I tell you, this is no surprise to me. People going to pay good for all that intelligence."

We drove up to Popper's cottage, and I knocked on the door. In "Unended Quest," Popper wrote that one of his first memories was feelings of admiration for his cousin Eric Schiff, "whom I greatly admired for being one year older than I, for his tidiness, and, especially, for his good looks: gifts which I always regarded as important and unobtainable." Good looks as an important *gift*, like a gift for writing or for thinking—it had seemed a strange idea to me at the time. But now I got it. Popper was a small, unimpressive man, several inches shorter even than I was—and I was a pipsqueak—and his long, solemn face was bracketed by a pair of elephantine ears. He was wearing a gray sweater, gray trousers that were too large in the seat, and a white shirt, missing a button from the left cuff.

The house led to a terrace that led to a small and straggly garden, with a scrawny, expiring apple tree.

"It's pleasant here," I said politely.

"Once it was pleasant here, but no more," he replied, shaking his head. An airplane hummed overhead and he looked at it as though it were an unrepentant Hegelian. We stood at the terrace door.

"I have something I wish to show you," he said abruptly, and he disappeared into the house. I stared blankly at my notebook full of high-minded questions. The sky looked threatening.

"Here," he said, coming back with two new books in his hand. "I have just received these in the mail this morning." One of the books was called "A Critique of Karl Popper's Methodology," by a certain Ingvar Johansson. The other one was in German. I opened the Johansson book and, at Popper's urging, read the inscription. "To Sir Karl with admiration, I. Johansson."

"Do you know Johansson, sir?" I asked.

"No, no." He took back the book and began to flip desultorily through its pages. "It is another attack, no doubt. You know, people do not distinguish between intellectual criticism and personal attacks. I don't receive criticism. They think it is enough to call me a fool."

"Oh, surely no one does that," I protested.

He smiled sadly. "All of my students are attacking me now. Three of my students, all of them I helped to get positions, to get chairs, and they know this, and still they attack me personally. You know, when you do things for people there are two types of reactions. There are those who cannot forget you for it and those who cannot forgive you for it. Do you see?"

He returned to thumbing through the book by Johansson. "He has read nothing of mine, of course. He will then attack this imaginary Popper. Since he already knows what is contained in my works, he need not read them, you see."

"Tell me," I said, "what criticism have you received in your career that has helped you—that you regard as really useful?"

He stared off for a long moment. "None," he said. "I have never received any of this kind of criticism." He looked away again. "Come. Let us go into the house."

The living room was large, and nearly empty, except for a grand piano in one corner. Six or seven small Rembrandt reproductions were hung around the room. We sat down in armchairs, with a table between us, and I realized that Popper was rather deaf; for the next four hours, as we spoke, he would cup one of his enormous ears and press it toward me. We talked, interrupted only by Popper's rising, at key moments, to go and fetch some book that he had mentioned and plop it down on the table. It seemed that for him the books were the reality; that the discussion about a book could not continue unless the book, the Real Presence, was at hand.

It is difficult to convey, after all these years, the vehemence with which he put forth his views—the silly, the profound, the trivial, and the deep. This was a man alive with resentments, vindictive anger, and persecution mania; at the same time, he had a kind of large-spiritedness, not remote from simple naïveté, that led him to open his door to a kid from Canada and fill him up with all his dogmas and doubts as though he were an old colleague.

Music—the great sequence that, for him, began with Bach and ended with Schubert—was his favorite art form, and he began to talk of his distaste for modern music. "It is terrible," he said. "And this is one of the most interesting and encouraging phenomena of our time—the failure of the historicist propaganda for the modern in music." Another famous book of his, "The Poverty of Historicism," attacked the popular notion that history had a shape, a progression, followed laws of development. "We have been exposed to this propaganda for fifty years, and it has been quite unsuccessful," he said. "There is something I must show you in this connection." He got up again, went into the next room, and came back with Charles Rosen's introduction to Schoenberg, a volume in the old Fontana Modern Masters series. (Popper himself had been a subject, in a short book by Bryan Magee.) He stood over me. "Read out the first paragraph of this book," he insisted.

I read, "Arnold Schoenberg always thought of himself as an inevitable historical force."

Popper grabbed the book from my hands and threw it down on the table. "Now, what has this to do with music?" he demanded. "We can wish to do our work well—but this wish to do work that is ahead of its time, this is nothing but historicist propaganda. Bach and Mozart never wished to shock people—they never worried about the 'shock value' of their work."

I tried to turn the subject to books, and asked him if there were any contemporary writers he admired.

"There are a very few I have enjoyed," he said. "The writer J. D. Salinger is the one I admire most. He has written one or two things that are quite good." He got up, found a dog-eared copy of "The Catcher in the Rye," and placed it on the table, where it joined Schoenberg and Johansson and the rest. "Yes, this is a very good study of adolescent psychology," he said. "I do not care for his last book. Tell me, what has he published recently?"

I informed him that Salinger hadn't published anything in a decade.

Popper stared off again. "Yes, no doubt he, too, was a victim of historicism."

What iron had entered his soul? Twenty-five years later, I still don't know. "Wittgenstein's Poker" is full of similar testimony, about Popper's ferocious temper and his inability to accept criticism of any kind. Even Bryan Magee, his most articulate popularizer, wrote, in a memoir, that "everything we argued about he pursued relentlessly, beyond the limits of acceptable aggression in conversation. . . . He seemed unable to accept the continued existence of different points of view, but went on and on and *on* about them with a kind of unforgivingness until the dissenter, so to speak, put his signature to a confession that he was wrong and Popper was right."

The situation was straight out of Molière: the greatest living exponent of the value and necessity of criticism would fly into a rage at the least breath of criticism. In one way, Popper's paranoia was a critique of his philosophy. People *don't* welcome criticism. In fact, even scientists dismiss criticism and potential falsifications until someone builds a new edifice on the basis of the black swan. Popper believed that competing hypotheses fought each other off nobly while we watched; the reality is that competing hypotheses are mauled, and then one creeps away to die in peace. No one ever really changes his mind about anything; there are just more minds that think the new way. Behaviorism, Freudianism—no one refuted them, really. They just passed away out of loneliness.

In another way, his persecution mania wasn't entirely unfounded. He had changed the climate of thought, but he had not changed the weather in philosophy departments. He felt cheated, and in a sense he had been. Although big ideas are meant to go from controversial to celebrated, in truth they more often go from contemptible to commonplace. "The earth is round!" someone says, and the world's first response is "You're mad!" and then, after someone takes measurements, "Of course it is! Who didn't know that?" It's a rule that applies with special force to Popper.

But what really underlay the contradiction between what he thought and what he was, I now think, after a quarter-century's reflection, is a perversity of human nature so deep that it is almost a law—the Law of the Mental Mirror Image. We write what we are not. It is not merely that we fail to live up to our best ideas but that our best ideas, and the tone that goes with them, tend to be the opposite of our natural temperament. Rousseau wrote of the feelings of the heart and the beauties of nature while stewing and seething in a little room. Dr. Johnson pleaded for Christian stoicism in desperate fear of damnation. The masters of the wry middle style, Lionel Trilling and Randall Jarrell, were mired in sadness and confusion. The angry and competitive man (James Thurber) writes tender and rueful humor because his own condition is what he seeks to escape. The apostles of calm reason are hypersensitive and neurotic; William James arrived at a pose of genial universal cheerfulness in the face of constant panic. Art critics are often visually insensitive—look at their living rooms!—and literary critics are often slow and puzzled readers, searching for the meaning, and cooks are seldom trenchermen, being more fascinated by recipes than greedy for food.

It is not so much that we are drawn to things that frighten us as that we are drawn to things that we can think of *as* things—as subjects that exist outside the boundaries of all that is just the way we are. It is not merely that we do not live up to our ideals but that we cannot, since our ideals are exactly the part of us that we do not instantly identify as just part of life. An original thought is like a death mask of a man, with the solids made hollow and the nose a cavity, a portrait pulled inside out. We *are* our ideas (Popper, with his long, slightly overformal sentences, lucid but unornamented by wit, sounded like Popper, and no one else), for they include everything we are—but turned right around to face us, and looking back at us in surprise.

I stayed for two more hours. Popper held forth on the question of "big" science—technological science, the science that sent men to the moon and made hydrogen bombs. ("It is a myth that the success of science in our time is mainly due to the huge amounts of money that have been spent on big machines. What really makes science grow is new ideas, including false ideas.") He recalled conversations with Albert Einstein in the fifties. ("You must understand that I learned nothing from Einstein directly, as a consequence of our conversations. He tended to express things in theological terms, and this was often the only way to argue with him. I found it finally quite uninteresting.")

At the very end, as the winter light dimmed in that cold and cheerless way it does in England, I asked him what unsolved problems might still interest him. I suppose I was trying to raise his spirits. "In contemporary philosophy there are no such problems," he said. "This is owing to the influence of Wittgenstein. As you know, Wittgenstein said that there are no philosophical problems, only linguistic puzzles. This has been the predominant attitude in Britain throughout my lifetime. As a result, there are no philosophers left, real philosophers who grapple with real problems. There are only professors who worry about words."

He turned and looked out the window, over the wintry hills of a Britain denuded of philosophy. He looked, as Holden Caulfield might say, goddam depressed. By now, the pile of books between us, Salinger and Bellow and Johansson and Ernest Jones and Kuhn and Forster, well-thumbed paperbacks and old university textbooks and leather-bound volumes all mixed up, had risen until he almost disappeared behind it.

Ironically, Popper was on the brink of a false spring of fame. Many of the first generation of Thatcherite intellectuals admired him keenly, and pointed to him as a model. But British Toryism was unhappy with a too tightly argued position, while his brief romance with the right damaged his reputation with the social democrats. In the century's last decade of liberal triumph, then, Popper's contemporary Isaiah Berlin, who in the seventies had seemed too plummy and sonorous and lacking in fighting spirit for a hero, became the image of enlightened humanism. Popperians, now and then, tend to be suspicious of Berlin, since he had all the gifts Popper lacked, and, though unquestionably on the right, or same, side, let rhetorical grace do a lot of the work of hard thought. Berlin lifts the curtain, peeks at the irrational, and then quickly closes it again, with a reassuring bow to his audience. It is squalid in there, but, fortunately, not too squalid to bear.

Yet Berlin, too, we now know from

Michael Ignatieff's biography, was the man his thought denied. The news his work provides that liberal humanism is superior precisely because it can encompass the humanity of even those who are most anti-liberal was a revelation. But it left him divided. He ended up believing in his head that the ideas of the good life could not be reconciled, and in his heart that they could all be reconciled in one genial temperament, or at one great dinner party. His charm and social curiosity—which, according to his biographer, flowed from his sense of insufficient accomplishment, as Popper's charmlessness flowed from his sense of thwarted recognition—ended by having a political meaning: though thoughts were not reconcilable, thinkers were, or might be. (It is an awkward truth that social life is the antidote to scholarly paranoia; it drains intellectual differences of their drama. The cure for the acrimony of intellectuals is dinner. Had Jesus invited a few Pharisees over for the Supper—and the Pharisees, let us remember, had been revolutionaries only a little while before—it might not have been his last. Dining with disciples is a perilous business.)

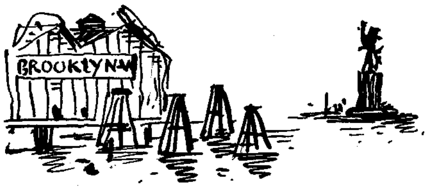
Between the heart and the head lies the soul, and soulfulness is not the least thing we ask of thought and thinkers. Liberal humanism, as much as it is a theory, is a style—even, at moments, a look, an appearance—of openness turned inward, social tolerance, geniality writ large; my naïve instinct that the civilized spirit was represented by Castiglione's smile had a drop of truth in it. Popper's philosophy, I now think, explained everything but Popper—left no room for the forces of ambition and attraction and jealousy and rage that governed his own life. His philosophy, so rich in so many other ways, did not allow for that kind of human perversity, or for his own doubleness. It was humane but inhuman.

I went to the British Museum the day after I returned from my pilgrimage, and happened to come across the vase that Keats wrote his ode about. Well, I thought, looking at the thing, so truth is not a black swan gliding, or a bunch of dancers dancing. Truth is an ugly duckling with big ears, truth is whatever it may be, and beauty is whatever it may be, and they are not the same, not at all, not even close. That urn had it all wrong. I knew *that* much now, and for sure. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Ambling Into History: The Unlikely Odyssey of George W. Bush, *by Frank Bruni (HarperCollins; $23.95).* Bruni, who covered the Bush campaign and the early Bush White House for the *Times*, announces at the start that Bush's ideology, his policies, and his life story "have been fairly well established," so he won't be discussing them. That's conceding an awful lot of ground, but within the narrow confines in which Bruni had to operate as a correspondent and has chosen to operate as an author—minute observation of the public Bush—he does a very good job. Bruni comes across as honest and perceptive, more prejudiced against Bush's opponents than in favor of Bush himself. And Bush comes across as a curious figure to be President; the first non-overachiever in memory to hold the job, he possesses a peculiar mixture of humility and presumption. Bruni, like many people who know Bush, seems to like him but not to completely respect him; he also doesn't appear to buy the patronizing idea that Bush suddenly grew up, at the age of fifty-five, on September 11th.

Bad Blood, *by Lorna Sage (Morrow; $24.95).* This wry family memoir by the late English literary critic Lorna Sage serves as a corrective to anyone harboring romantic notions about growing up in rural Britain. The author's grandfather was a licentious vicar in a small town near the Welsh border who blacked out the titles of his books so that parishioners wouldn't ask to borrow them. Her grandmother spent most days in bed—hoarding sweets and coal, and cursing her husband's wickedness—while Sage's mother served as the family drudge. Bathing was considered vaguely suspect; neighbors were to be despised; no one taught Lorna how to tell time. Life beyond the vicarage proved little better, as the Dickensian cruelties of the classroom competed with the Darwinian realities of the schoolyard. But these miseries are offset by the humor and lack of self-pity with which they are vigorously recounted; at once literary and scientifically exacting, Sage's investigations bring an entire era alarmingly to life.



Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy, *by Jean Bethke Elshtain (Basic; $28).* Seventy years ago, Jane Addams, the founder of the settlement-house movement, was the most highly regarded woman in America; since then, however, she has been accused of being both a mushy do-gooder and a faux radical. In a new biography, Elshtain liberates Addams from these caricatures, arguing that her subject's brand of tough-minded Progressivism is extremely relevant today. Although Addams fought hard for reform legislation, she was deeply skeptical of the idea that government was the answer to every problem; her work with immigrant families at Hull-House, which stressed personal responsibility and civic engagement, was inimical to the welfare-state mentality that came to dominate American liberalism. Elshtain's writing is stilted and overwrought, but her reclamation effort is convincing, allowing us to understand why the social critic Jacob Riis once wrote, "They have good sense in Chicago. Jane Addams is there."

The Strength of the Sun, *by Catherine Chidgey (Holt; $23).* When Patrick Mercer, an elderly British medievalist on his way to sort out his dead mother's things, ends up in a coma after a car crash, his friends send regular reports to everyone in his address book, urging letters and visits. The list includes twenty-one-year-old Colette Hawkins, a bewildered, at-loose-ends New Zealander, who has never heard of him. Chidgey is interested in how the web of human interactions can stretch over space and time, and she's written an elegant, connect-the-dots novel, in which each step the characters make toward one another proves emotionally treacherous.

BOOKS

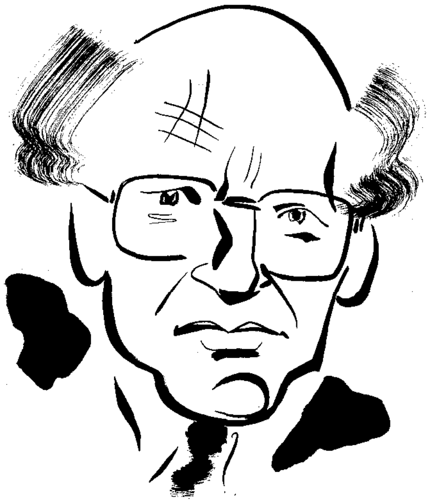
ABSENT PRESENCES

In a new novel, an Englishman returns to a childhood summer.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Bernard Shaw couldn't do it, Henry James couldn't do it, but the ingenious English author Michael Frayn does do it: write novels and plays with equal success. His most recent play, "Copenhagen," about a problematical meeting in 1941 between the physicist Werner Heisenberg and his Danish mentor Niels Bohr, won three Tony Awards and ran on Broadway for more than nine months; his 1999 novel, "Headlong," concerning the possible discovery of a lost painting by Bruegel, was listed among the Booker Prize finalists and the *Times Book Review's* Editors' Choices. Frayn began light, writing topical and humorous columns for the *Guardian*, but has extended his reach and seriousness while keeping a sprightly intellectuality. A brilliant novella of 1989, "The Trick of It" (first published in this magazine), was comic in the obtuse maneuvering of its hero, a literal-minded young academic mismarried to a middle-aged novelist of the eccentric, Spark/Murdoch/Rose Macaulay mold, but profound in its grasp of the opposition between the creative spirit and the critical.

Frayn's new novel, "Spies" (Holt; $23), drapes a valedictory sadness upon a mystery-story armature. Two boys—our unkempt, ductile hero, Stephen Wheatley, and his impeccable, domineering friend Keith Hayward—set about investigating, in their little neighborhood of fourteen properties, Keith's abrupt declaration that his mother is a German spy. The boys live on a rather newly built dead-end street called the Close, between a small shopping district and, on the other side of the railroad tracks, rural dilapidation. The Second World War is in progress, and though neither the year nor the boys' ages are specified, later clues reveal that Stephen was two in 1935, which would give him Frayn's own birth year, 1933, and make him ten in 1943 and eleven in 1944. The war feels well advanced—one house in the Close has been bombed, but no further air raids are mentioned in the summer of the novel's action—and Stephen, who, among other adventures, smokes cigarettes and kisses a girl, is advancing toward puberty. The neighborhood is carefully mapped, house by house, but only three homes are entered by Stephen and by the novelist's descriptive eye. There is Stephen's own household, about which he seems remarkably incurious; it consists of his mother, a brother older by four years, and a gentle, conspicuously hairy father who was absent for a year on a secret project in the north and whose conversation is sprinkled with foreign expressions. There is the Haywards', consisting of Keith, his mother, and his father, a menacing constant presence who whistles tunelessly, busies himself with home improvements, and keeps sharp a bayonet with which he reportedly slew five Germans in the First World War. And, three houses down from the Haywards', there is Auntie Dee's: she is Mrs. Hayward's younger sister and the mother of a toddler, Milly, and the wife of the Close's war hero, Uncle Peter, a bomber pilot in the R.A.F. "His very absence was a kind of presence," we are told. "He was manifest in the little silver brooch that Auntie Dee always had pinned to her breast, that showed the three famous initials on a blue enamel background, with the famous wings outspread around them and the famous crown above."



Michael Frayn

The novel's gradual revelations cut on the bias through this human topography, described with a child's acuteness of sensation and innocence of perception. Stephen, now an elderly man living on the Continent, is stirred to revisit his old turf, after a half century's absence, by a flowery scent in the air, "something quite harsh and coarse." The smell, which he cannot name, "has a kind of sexual urgency to it. And it unsettles me, as it always does. . . . I have a feeling that something, somewhere, has been left unresolved, that some secret thing in the air around me is still waiting to be discovered." Frayn asks a certain mental nimbleness from his readers; the secret thing emerges bit by bit, with no tidy summing up. It is left to the adult reader, for example, to deduce that the mysterious markings the young sleuths find in Keith's mother's diary record her monthly periods (with tiny "x"s) and her occasions of intercourse (with exclamation marks!), and that these and her frequent rests indicate a desire to conceive and give Keith a sibling. The boys never realize this, though they assign a pregnant fatality to the dark of the moon, which coincides with Mrs. Hayward's inscrutable "x"s. The additional hugger-mugger of her comings and goings on errands during which she briefly vanishes, and of the unsuburbanized rural area beyond the other end of the sinister railroad tunnel, an area full of barking dogs and barn ruins and unsavory rumors, is lifted into clarification but held there for only a moment, before dropping back into the other obscurities of childhood and nostalgia.

The ultimate conspiracy, sex, sends forth two agents to Stephen: intrusive, bothersomely knowing Barbara Berrill, a year older than he, and tall, brown-eyed, soft-voiced Mrs. Hayward herself, who as her private plot thickens needs to enlist the child in her errands and seductively invades his and Keith's sweet-smelling den of privet. Even a slow-witted reader will guess the heart of her predicament before Stephen, who, like the bookish, adult hero of "Headlong," shows a formidable capacity for sustaining an obfuscation. Stephen does, however, deduce the reason for the scarves that Mrs. Hayward comes to wear at her throat—they conceal periodic wounds—and that Keith, like his father, is a bullying sadist. Not all the Nazis are on the other side.

As in "Headlong," slightly too much seems to happen toward the end, abetted by too many artfully delayed recognitions. The playwright in Frayn imposes the accelerating pace of farce on his grave, tenderly evoked materials. A tangle of facial hair continues to hide an evident identity, a "terrible secret force" emerges from the railroad tracks, a small boy makes not one but several excursions into the dangerous night. And then the curtain quickly falls: Stephen never plays with Keith again, he never returns to their lair in the overgrown bushes of the bombed house, he never attempts to deliver a silk aviator's scarf entrusted to him, along with some words of undying love. Nor, to this reader's disappointment, does his tour of his boyhood neighborhood encounter any human survivors of that remote time. Such tours, in my own experience, usually do, and in literature they are almost obliged to: Odysseus is recognized by the ancient dog, Argos, who was a puppy when he left; Captain Ryder discovers Nanny Hawkins still ensconced in her top-floor room at Brideshead; Mickey Sabbath, in Philip Roth's "Sabbath's Theater," comes upon Cousin Fish still alive, though "a mere mist of a man." In "Spies," a reunion seems prepared. Keith's old house, still named Chollerton, is kept up by someone's fanatic hands: "The mellow red brick is still well-pointed, the woodwork of the window frames and gables and garage doors as flawlessly white as when Mr. Hayward used to paint them himself, in white overalls as clean as the paintwork, whistling, whistling, from morning to night." Yet the proud owner, who could be Keith, carrying on his father's style, remains hidden. Stephen does not knock at the door, and when, further along the street, he sees "a white-haired old lady" kneeling to weed what had been the Berrills' front garden, he fights a recognition:

> She glances up at me and I suddenly realize, with the most terrible jolt of recognition, of hope and dismay, that it's Barbara.
>
> She looks indifferently at me for a moment and then returns to her weeding. It's not Barbara. Of course it's not. I don't think it is.

Stephen is not seeking a companion survivor of time, to illuminate those distant events. He revolves them within himself, aided only by local geography, changed and unchanged. In this, "Spies" differs from Ian McEwan's recent, in some ways similarly backward-looking novel "Atonement," and from Harry Mulisch's even more similar "The Assault" (1982), wherein subsequent revelations, over the years, change the meaning of a violent wartime night in a Dutch enclave of four houses. Stephen became, he tells us, a searcher after reality; his English marriage "was never quite a real marriage," and his job teaching engineering in the local polytechnic "never quite a real job." He found reality in another country, and now what in German is called "*Fernweh*, which is in my case also *Heimweh*, a longing to be home," has brought him back, toward the end of life, to the Close and its "sweet, coarse, and intimately unsettling" scent of privet in bloom.

Aside from the understated tact and ingenuity of its mystery plot, Frayn's novel excels in its rendering of the power of early impressions, a power that fetishizes and eternalizes such modest phenomena as certain vague smells, certain details of dress coded with signs of class and origin, certain sounds betraying the life in other houses, certain coveted elegancies like the "jug covered by a lace weighted with four blue beads" in which Mrs. Hayward serves lemon barley to her son and his friend in the garden of her polished, fascinatingly furnished house. Children are surrounded by clues, by elusive emanations from the opaque and impervious adult world, and thus are all spies, increasingly expert and secretive. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Whitefish Bay (Wis.) Herald.

A 19-year-old Richfield resident was arrested for absolute sobriety in the 1000 block of East Capitol Drive June 24.

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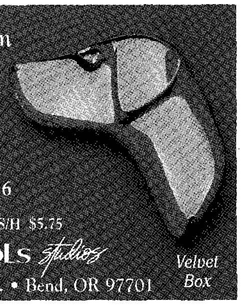

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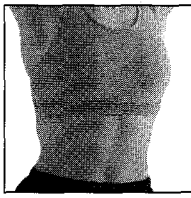

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MUSICAL EVENTS

COMING APART

City Opera vs. Lincoln Center.

BY ALEX ROSS

What is wrong with Lincoln Center? The problem goes deeper than the virtuoso bickering over redevelopment which, to judge from reports, fills the corridors of what is called "the world's largest cultural complex." The chief personalities of the place—Beverly Sills, Joseph Volpe, Paul Kellogg, and the rest—make entertaining copy, and it would almost be a pity if the soap opera were to end. But, no matter who is in charge, Lincoln Center will remain Lincoln Center, and that is not entirely a positive thing. A nimbus of corporate blandness hangs over the institution. With the exception of the mighty Met, which still brings forth wonders, the major resident musical organizations—City Opera, the New York Philharmonic, the Chamber Music Society, New York City Ballet—have a faintly spiritless air. They put on good shows, they draw good crowds, but, to quote Bertolt Brecht's libretto for "Mahagonny," something is lacking. It's telling that Great Performers at Lincoln Center has lately created a buzz by staging events outside Lincoln Center. It's also telling that City Opera, buoyed by a fifty-million-dollar donation, may move out of the complex altogether, possibly to a new arts center in the vicinity of the World Trade Center site.

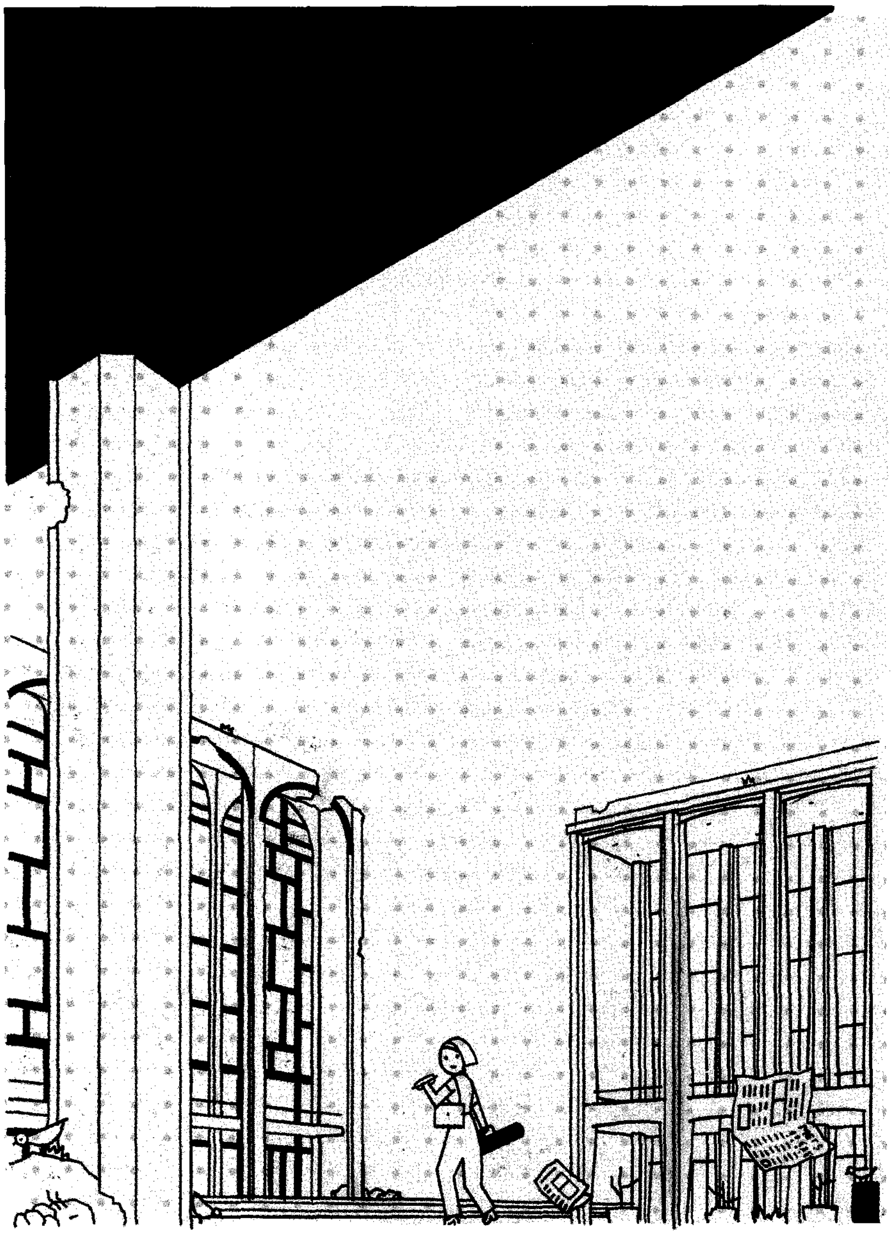
Given that there is now a $1.2-billion renovation plan on the boards, New Yorkers might want to ask how well Lincoln Center has done its job. Robert Moses conceived the complex as a shining city of the arts, taking the place of neighborhoods that he called "dismal and decayed." It did succeed in sprucing up the Upper West Side and placing the companies in a secure cocoon. But Lincoln Center has never been able to foster an ideal cultural populace that delights equally in opera, ballet, and symphony. In my experience, opera people, ballet people, and symphony people seldom overlap comfortably. The lumping together of such distinct art forms has made it harder for each company to define itself crisply in the public eye. Ensconced in the limestone fortress, they have become subspecies of "the performing arts," whose main characteristic, the curious onlooker might decide, is an edifying stuffiness. For whatever reason, a lot of well-educated younger people of my acquaintance do not often make the trip to Broadway and Sixty-sixth Street. I once waited in vain for a friend from the East Village because he was unable to *find* Lincoln Center.

One great difficulty is the look of the place. Even purists have to admit that what they hear is affected by where they are and what they see. Lincoln Center is an environment with little warmth. You might call it an airport terminal for the performing arts, except that most airport terminals offer better spots to sit and wait. (When I have time to kill in the area, I look for a comfy chair at the Barnes & Noble across the street.) City Opera, the most sprightly of the constituents, is stuck with the most soulless of the spaces; the State Theatre is not so much acoustically bad as acoustically null. The music sags and dies in front of you. Attempts to support the singers with amplification have done little more than give the hollowness a ragged edge. Also, the configuration of the seating—endless rows, no center aisle—stifles communication among the listeners. You cannot move around and talk to other patrons; there is no sense of a shared experience. Instead, you shuffle awkwardly to your seat, sit for the duration, and shuffle out.

Compare the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, in Newark. N.J.P.A.C., to use its grim acronym, is, after Carnegie Hall and Symphony Hall, in Boston, the best orchestral space in the Northeast. With its classic horseshoe shape, glowing dark-wood interior, and warmly resonant acoustic, it exudes the personality of a nineteenth-century room. On a recent visit, I found myself wishing that it could be transported in one piece to Lincoln Center, preferably to occupy a vacant lot left by Avery Fisher Hall. New Yorkers may also feel a pang of envy upon visiting Philadelphia's new Verizon Hall. Like N.J.P.A.C., Verizon (how much uglier can these names get?) was designed by the firm of Artec, which understands the weird science of psychoacoustics. The acoustic itself has problems—the sound is vivid but hazy, suggesting an incredibly good but not quite lifelike stereo system—but the hall seduces the eyes with its mahogany veneer. There is a glorious open-air lobby to beckon the public inside. The most ambitious of the Lincoln Center renovation plans called, similarly, for an enclosure of the entire plaza, designed by Frank Gehry, but this has been voted down. Too bad: the pizzazz of a Gehry design, or any kind of design, might have seeped out onto this stretch of upper Broadway, which gets very sleepy after ten o'clock.

City Opera should jump at the chance to leave this rudderless ship. It has always been in the Met's shadow; there was never a good reason to have the two opera companies side by side. Lincoln Center's plaza is Met-centric, giving visitors a self-important thrill as they stride toward the Met's pompous façade. City Opera needs to angle itself toward the public in a completely different way. Its best bet is to be small and think big—the exact reverse of the prevailing Lincoln Center philosophy.

Since Paul Kellogg took over as general and artistic director, in 1996, City Opera has become markedly more stylish and distinctive. It has done excellently with Baroque opera and tuneful twentieth-century fare. Last season it presented a beautiful, meticulous revival of Korngold's "Die Tote Stadt," an opera that haunts the mind in ways that its twenty-three-year-old composer could never have anticipated. Coming soon is a new version of Handel's "Agrippina"—the sort of freewheeling rewrite of the Baroque that City Opera has managed well in the past. If the company were to move into a considerably smaller theatre—one that contained, say, eighteen hundred seats—it would be able to give this repertory an intimacy that eludes the Met.



Overshadowed by the mighty Met, City Opera is looking for a way out.

Despite the talk of moving downtown, Kellogg's City Opera remains a decidedly uptown institution. It is not the sort of place where a younger audience might go to seek adventure. If City Opera wanted to blaze a new trail, it could radicalize its repertory, delving seriously into contemporary opera. So far, however, the Kellogg regime's most successful contemporary offerings have been of the safe, neo-Romantic variety—Tobias Picker's "Emmeline," the three-composer omnibus "Central Park." Last fall, the company presented "Lilith," by Deborah Drattell, which began with a powerful, mysterious choral scene and then proceeded to move around in circles for a very long time. Next season will bring Jake Heggie's "Dead Man Walking," which, to judge from a new recording of the San Francisco Opera's première production, is a flashy treatment of a gripping subject. In part, City Opera is captive to the torpor of American opera, an art form that has never quite broken free of the nineteen-forties populism of Aaron Copland and seems perpetually lost in that well-travelled prairie. There are other worlds waiting to be explored, and the company's admirable commitment to the American repertory should not limit its field of vision. What about the minimalist classics of Reich, Glass, and Adams? Or such spiky new masterpieces as Thomas Adès's "Powder Her Face" and Osvaldo Golijov's "St. Mark Passion"? Or European conceptual works by HK Gruber and Heiner Goebbels? Why not open dialogues with pop musicians who are incorporating classical elements into their work—the likes of Radiohead, Björk, and Rufus Wainwright?

City Opera also lacks a sharp profile in the standard repertory. Decades ago, the company billed itself as a people's opera, a place where neophytes could get their first taste of "La Bohème." Today, with so many seats in the ninety-dollar range, City Opera can no longer be called a bargain, and the Met, with its wider range of ticket prices and its introduction of high-tech subtitles, has an equal claim on the populist franchise. A new production of "Don Giovanni," directed by Thor Steingraber, looks fatally like a junior version of the austere bombast that has often passed for innovation at the Met. Huge doors going nowhere, window frames hanging in space, a gigantic mirror: it's a cool, spare, Lincoln Center-ish aesthetic, and it swallows up the lusty life of Mozart's masterpiece. A few years ago, at Glimmerglass Opera, Kellogg presented a fresh take on "Don Giovanni" in which the title character was a dirty old invalid, and, whatever the merits of that approach, the audience went out talking. City Opera chose the path of no comment.

A young, gifted cast struggled to find drama in this arid setting. The Don was sung by the Australian baritone Peter Coleman-Wright. He was a lively, confident presence, spitting out recitative at breakneck speed. Amy Burton, one of the company's most accomplished regulars, delivered a warm-toned, richly detailed portrayal of Donna Elvira. Alexandrina Pendatchanska, as Donna Anna, showed a dusky, forceful lyric voice. Kevin Burdette brought high spirits and a booming bass to the role of Masetto. Nathan Berg and Raul Hernandez also sang well. George Manahan, in the pit, gave a strong shape to the music, even as the acoustic defeated him at every turn. In the end, these singers failed to send out any psychic shivers, but they might have had more impact if they had simply been somewhere else. I pictured them in an atmospheric little theatre on a bustling downtown street, where the audience could walk in and be clobbered by the demonic force of Mozart's tale. ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

PLAY IT AGAIN

"The Piano Teacher."

BY DAVID DENBY

Professor Erika Kohut (Isabelle Huppert), who gives piano lessons to advanced students at the Vienna Conservatory, stands at the window of her studio and hurls thunderbolts at the teen-age musicians. When a talented boy hits a clinker, she says, "A wrong note in Beethoven is better than a bad interpretation," which, she implies, is his real crime. Erika, who is both the heroine and the villain of Michael Haneke's audaciously brilliant "The Piano Teacher," has a masklike face and an air of indefinable hauteur. Again and again, she tells her students that they are spiritually inadequate, and though they may tremble and weep, they do not protest. It never occurs to anyone at the conservatory that Erika might be trying to destroy, not nurture, the young musicians. After all, harsh dismissal is an accepted style in Viennese music circles—Mahler himself, perhaps the most nakedly emotional of all composers, was often coldly sarcastic in person. Great music lives at the intersection of mathematics and spiritual exaltation, and Erika, who plays well and has keen insights into her favorites, Schubert and Schumann, always clothes her nastiness in the appropriate colors.

High-minded and rigorous, she has sacrificed everything for her work. She lives in an apartment with her hysterically possessive mother (Annie Girardot); the two of them take turns bullying and even slapping each other, only to fall asleep in the same bed like exhausted lovers. When a possible actual lover appears, an insolently charming student named Walter Klemmer (Benoît Magimel), Erika fends him off with insults. But Walter, strong and quick, and as handsome as an Olympic skier, is not to be deterred, and after a few bristling exchanges he imagines himself in love with Erika. Walter has the sexual vanity of a young conqueror: he thinks he's going to melt the iron maiden with tenderness. But tenderness is the last thing Erika wants. She manipulates and torments Walter, trying to turn him into a lover who will humiliate her according to her own atrocious fantasies.

"The Piano Teacher," which is based on a boiling 1983 novel by the Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek, is about sadomasochism as an implacable human destiny. Those of us who love the movie will insist on the humanity of the portrait: Erika may be a nut straight out of the clinical literature, but she's also a remarkable dramatic creation—an appalling but plausible human being brought to life by one of the world's bravest actresses. "The Piano Teacher," which won the top prizes at last year's Cannes Film Festival, is a genuinely shocking work, and I sense from preliminary conversations that I'm going to have trouble convincing more than a few people that some of it is also very funny. At first glance, Michael Haneke is an entirely serious fellow. A widely produced German playwright, he began making feature films in 1989, at the age of forty-seven, and now works with French actors (he directed the piercing "Code Unknown," with Juliette Binoche, which played here last fall). Haneke is certainly not playful and naughty like Luis Buñuel, whose lyrical 1967 masterpiece, "Belle de Jour," revealed the fantasies and part-time bordello life of an outwardly proper *bourgeoise*—a movie that is the obvious reference point for "The Piano Teacher." This film, by contrast, offers a realistic representation of a disturbed personality, set in the solemn cultural center of great music and psychoanalytic theory. Yet the wit is there,

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beneath the surface, mischievously linking the outer world of Erika's accomplishment and the inner world of her destructive hatreds. Haneke's attitude is one of malicious curiosity fringed with respect. Erika is a monster, but we're not meant to pity her or dismiss her as pathetic.

Now and then, after class, Erika sneaks off to a posh video-porn parlor and watches the action in a little booth, or she wanders around a drive-in theatre and spies on couples making love. Eagerly, she draws ever closer to the abyss of exposure and disgrace. "The Piano Teacher" is a dance of self-annihilation: Erika has no interest in pleasure or release. The excitement she feels, in both its sadistic and its masochistic forms, is almost completely mental. She tells Walter that Schumann's Fantasy in C Major conveys a sense of losing one's reason (Schumann struggled with madness in the years after composing it); she would like to think that she can experience that state herself. Absolute control of art and of madness is her sole desire and her sole vanity. But messy life keeps breaking up the rigid mental rituals. In the scene that is the hardest to watch, Erika sits on the edge of the tub at home and cuts herself in a private place with a razor. We may think, Why are we being subjected to this? But in the middle of the scene Erika's mother calls her to dinner. The scary grandeur of Erika's self-purifying rite gives way to the daily banality of getting along with Mom, and the effect is irresistibly comical.

Haneke's camera moves with Erika in her prowls around Vienna, but often it remains still, perched above a piano and looking straight down at hands playing on the keyboard; or it holds Huppert's face in closeup as she thinks pure and dirty thoughts. Haneke avoids the sensationalism of movie shockers, even high-class shockers like Hitchcock's "Psycho" and Polanski's "Repulsion." There are no expressionist moments in "The Piano Teacher"—no scenes of longing, no soft-focus dreams or cinematic dreck. Haneke's frame is clear, lucid, and calm, and he is working with an actress who can draw fury out of extreme elegance and self-containment. Huppert's thin eyebrows are arched down, matching the downward curve of her mouth, and her reddish-brown hair is pinned tightly around her head. She seems as composed and symmetrical as a figure in an Old Master painting. Much of her best acting is no more than a flicker of consciousness, barely visible around the edges of the mask. Yet she gives a classic account of repression and sexual hypocrisy, unleashing the kind of rage that the great Bette Davis might have expressed in an old Warner Bros. melodrama like "The Letter," if only she had been working in an unfettered climate.

Isabelle Huppert gives a classic account of repression and sexual hypocrisy.

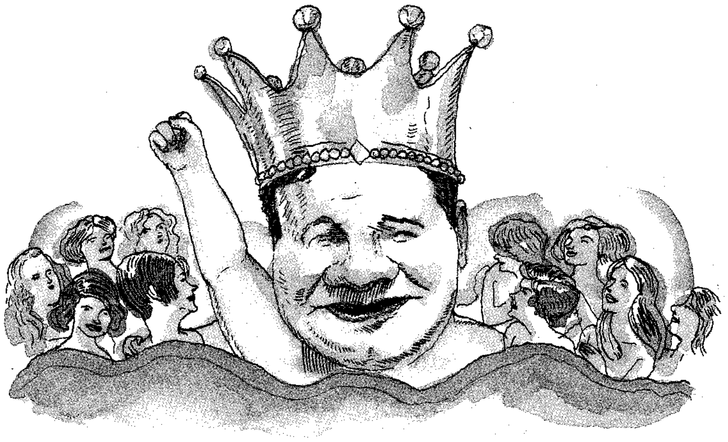
SYLVIA PLACHY

My guess is that Haneke's long experience in the theatre has shaped his idea of characterization as a form of armor for warfare. Each of Huppert's scenes with Annie Girardot, for instance, turns into a power struggle fraught with hints of incest and abuse, and Erika's flirtations with Walter might have been scripted by a Strindberg with a flair for musical banter. "Disdaining Bruckner is immature," she says to him—which is true but is not a line I ever expected to hear in a movie, even a movie set in musical Vienna. The intellectual patter (all quite authentic) rattles across the field like Napoleonic musketfire. At first, Erika tries to use her powers as a teacher to dominate Walter. Benoît Magimel has bow lips, a cleft chin, and a springing step—good looks enhanced by high spirits—and initially he just grins and rolls with the punches. The two have a long encounter in the conservatory's bathroom which may be the strangest sex scene in the history of the movies—it's a stop-and-go business in which they both fight for dominance. In the weeks that follow, Erika exasperates her young lover, but he retaliates: Walter acts not according to the instructions he receives but with the commonplace violence of an angry man asserting his superior strength, and Erika, disobeyed, is bereft.

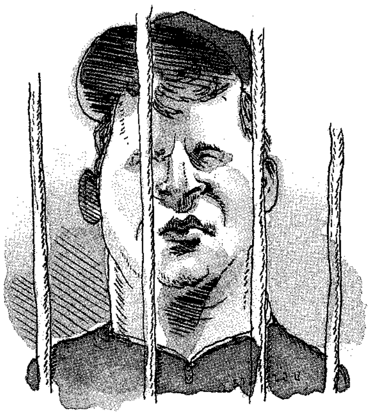
"Schubert's dynamics range from scream to whisper, not loud to soft," Erika says to Walter, and that's her dynamic range, too. I trust that music-lovers will not accuse Haneke of dragging Bach, Schubert, and Brahms (all heard at length) through the mud. The Schubert songs, with their delicate fervency, their sense of foreboding, offer a taste of the irrational, even a longing for it, within the frame of art. Like Schubert's music, the movie addresses the deepest feelings, where eros and murderous rages can easily mingle with transcendent exultation. Yet the music floats free from Erika's perversity—it's the healthy part of her fanaticism. She's both a debased person and a heroine of art. And "The Piano Teacher," which combines Viennese erotic obsessions with French and German film classicism, is heroic, too. But now the movie faces American innocence and literal-mindedness, which could consign it to oblivion. "The Piano Teacher" is a seriously scandalous work, beautifully made, and it deserves a sizable audience that might argue over it, appreciate it—even hate it. Professor Erika Kohut may have shameful secrets, but abandoning her story to an empty closet would be a greater disgrace. ◆

THE BACK PAGE BY BARRY BLITT

Baseball Records That May Never Fall



HOOKERS AT ONE TIME
Babe Ruth
24



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Denny McLain
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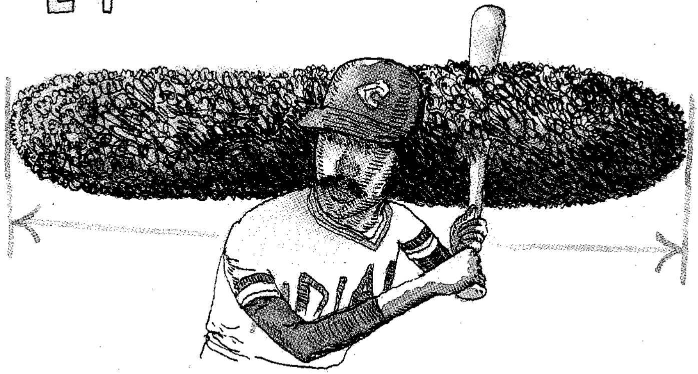
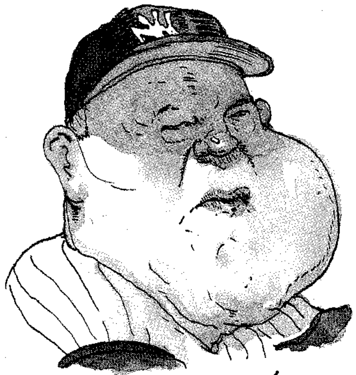


AFRO SPAN
Oscar Gamble
5'3"



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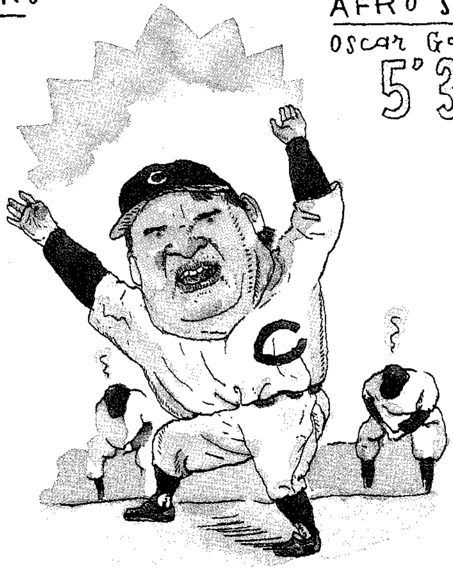

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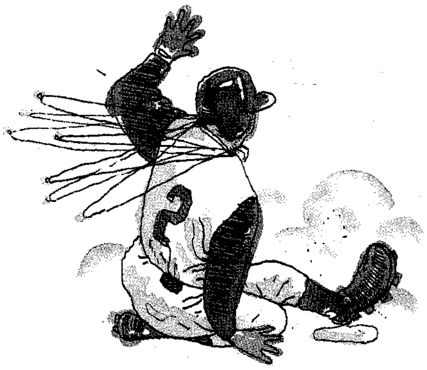

GOLD CHAINS
Deion Sanders
42

B. Blitt

Silent Witnesses to History

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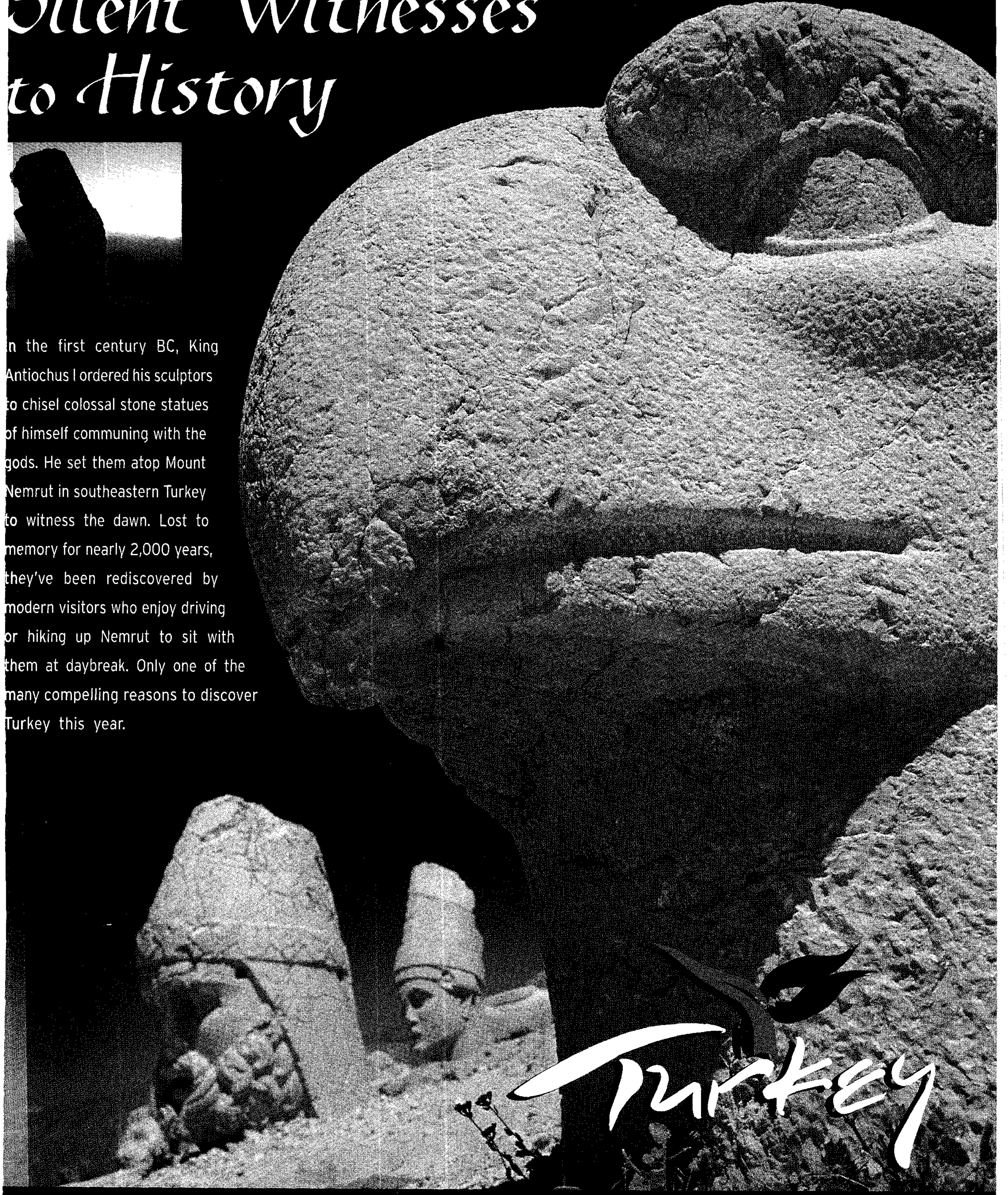

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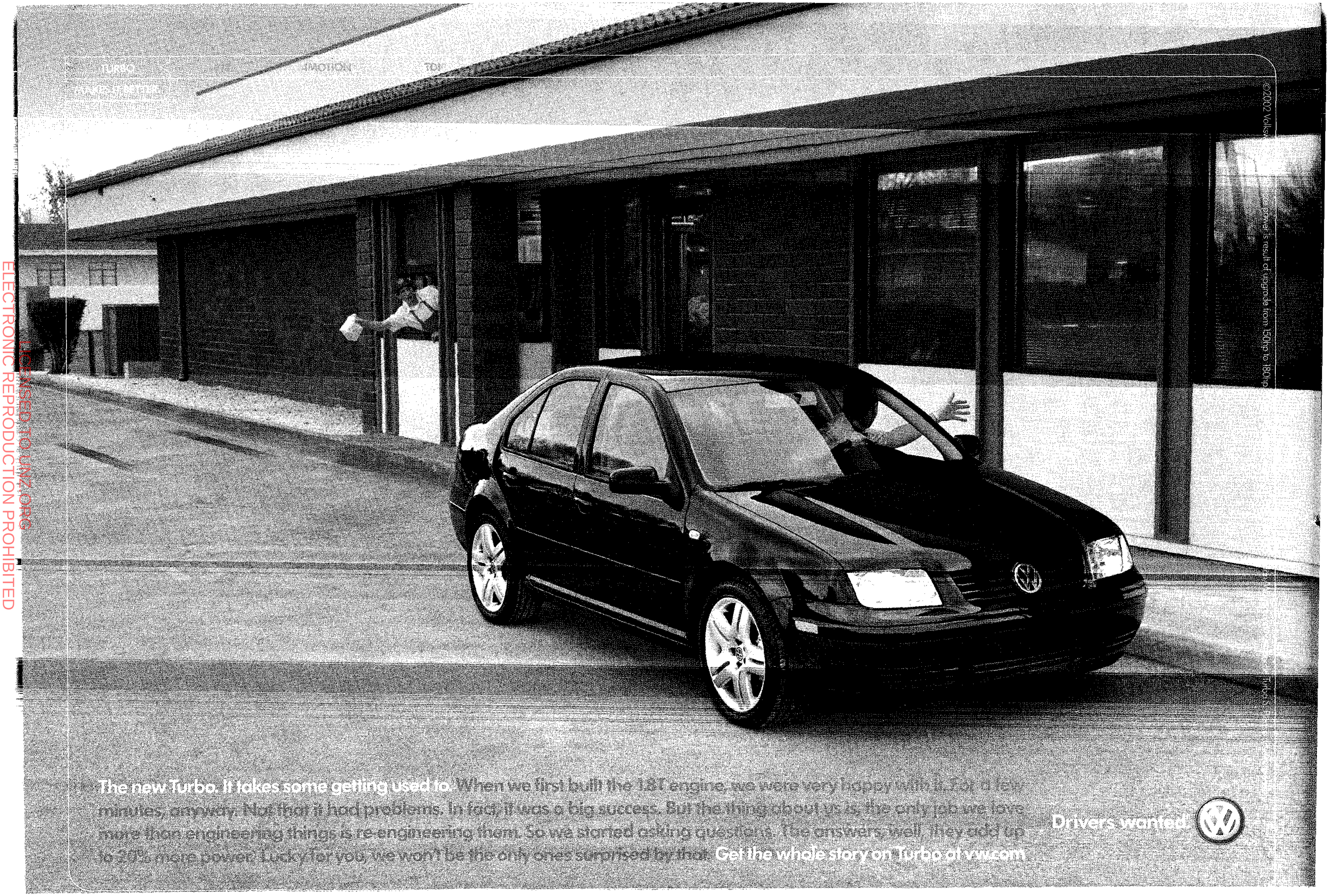

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